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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 21, 1816.

TO READERS.

All the former NUMBERS, from No. 15 to 24, are reprinted, and may be had at the Office, No. 192, Strand, upon application. The wholesale price is 12*s.* 6*d.* a hundred, and, if a thousand copies be regularly taken by persons *in the country*, the price is 11*s.* a hundred.——Letters with Orders must be *post paid*.—The clear profit upon 100, sold by retail, is, 4*s.* 2*d.* and, upon 1,000, if taken in the Country regularly, is, 2*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* —It is desirable to have large, wholesale sellers, in the country, who will take thousands a week and supply others *who retail round about*.—If any persons, disposed to do this, will address themselves, *postage paid*, to the publisher, their propositions will be attended to.—I have heard of various *unfair means*, made use of by our enemies in the country, to prevent the circulation of the Register. No wonder; for they justly dread the effect of the people hearing those *truths*, which have been kept from them for so many years. At ROMSEY, in Hampshire, particular pains have been taken in this way. The keepers of public-houses have by busy persons been frightened for their *licences*. A bookseller, who sold the Register, was scared by threats of loss of the custom of our enemies. In the same town a foolish and lying paper, at *a penny*, has been printed and hawked about the country in *opposition* to me. LORD PALMERSTON, the *Secretary at War*, lives close by ROMSEY, and the people impute these things to him; but, though, I dare say, Lord Palmerston wishes the Register and its author both at Old Nick, I do not believe him capable of acting so mean, so base, so cowardly, so infamous a part. No: these acts must have been committed by some dirty wretch, who is seeking to get an office. I should, however, like to know the *names* and *characters* and *callings* of these wretches, that I may expose them. In the meanwhile I assure our good and honest friends *in the Country*, that though the bloodsuckers call my little book *seditious*, it contains *no sedition*, no *libel*, and that I will answer with my life for the *lawfulness* of every word of it. It is lawful for any one to sell it. Several persons have been *threatened* to be prosecuted under the *Hawker's and Pedlar's Act* for hawking my little book. I will, therefore, explain this matter. All Hawkers and Pedlars must have *a licence*. But in the FIRST PLACE, any one may sell *any* thing in a *Market Town* on the *Market Day*, without any licence. SECONDLY,

all "*printed papers, licensed by Authority*," may be hawked about without a licence; and, this paper of mine *is* licensed by authority now, as much as news-papers are, seeing that I have now *paid a tax for it* at the Stamp-Office in London. This was not the case with the *open-sheets*; but, even in that case, the thing has *always* been *permitted* by the government; and it is well known, that *Last-Dying Speeches* and numerous other papers have *always* been permitted to be hawked about. Nay, the *penny papers* in opposition to me, are *permitted* at this moment. An impudent fellow at Lymington, who was asked by some of the people, why he dared to hawk *them*, if *mine* could not be hawked, said, that "*the government would protect him.*" My readers may be sure that this is false. The government would not be guilty of such base partiality and injustice, though some wretches, who wish to get into favour and to fatten upon the people, may wish it.—So that there is *no danger* from the *law*. Any one may sell, at any time, and in any place, or in any manner.—Those who sell by *retail* ought to *fold* the Register, that the purchasers may have them ready to begin reading, and, before beginning to read, the reader should stick *a pin* in the middle of the back of the book to hold the leaves together when they are cut open.—Thus each Number will be a nice little handy book of itself; and, as the *pages* will be marked by figures, the several Numbers, when put together at the end of a certain time, will make a tolerably thick book, which a man may read over and over again, and it will serve his children to read as they grow up, and thus will they be well informed as to their rights and duties as well as their fathers and mothers. And, why should they not? Why should they be ignorant of those rights and duties? Have not the Labourers, as well as their employers, liberties and lives to defend? Do they not mainly assist to fight the battles of their country by sea and land? Are they not called out to serve in the militia and local militia? Have they not wives and children whom they love to see happy? Have they not arms to fight and to labour, and have they not minds to understand, and hearts to feel?—Have they not a right to happiness, and shall I be accused of *sedition*, because I endeavour, to the best of my humble abilities, to point out to them how to obtain and secure that happiness?

To those Gentlemen, who have taken the trouble to forward me, by letter, the copies of *Votes of Thanks*, I beg to return my best acknowledgements. I am particularly gratified by a vote passed at Sheffield, concluding with an expression of "a

"conviction, that, in the late tumult, "in this town, the influence of Mr. "COBBETT's excellent advice, which "had been so generally read, pre- "vented the multitude from pro- "ceeding to any serious acts of Riot, "to which they were frequently in- "cited by disorderly persons."

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

COUNTRY GENTLEMEN,

Showing that their only remaining choice is between Parliamentary Reform and Total Ruin.

London, 20th Dec. 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

Innumerable are the instances in private life where men blindly and pertinaciously listen to those who are their worst enemies, who are undermining their characters and their fortunes, and who are fattening at their expence, while, towards those who are naturally as well as by inclination their friends, they wear an eye of constant suspicion, and entertain a feeling nearly approaching to that of enmity. That this failing, which is so common amongst individuals, is not without its influence on whole bodies of men, the conduct of the Country Gentlemen of these Islands, for many years past, most abundantly proves. And, as such conduct in private life seldom fails to produce ruin to the party, or his family; so, in your case, total ruin to yourselves, or, at least, to your descendants, appears to be a consequence altogether inevitable, unless you immediately rouse yourselves, shake off the infatuation, and act as becomes men who have children whom they do not wish to become beggarly dependents.

Amongst the other marks of this fatal infatuation, is, an obstinate refusal not only to follow the advice of those who propose a Reform of the Parliament, or who disapprove of the measures of the government; but, a refusal equally obstinate to *hear* what they have to say. A stubborn, a stupid, a contemptible obstinacy, to give way to which is justly punishable with ruin and disgrace. And, indeed, instead of patiently hearing what we have to say, no small part of you have repaid our endeavours with every species of persecution within your power. You have shown no sense of justice in these matters. You have not heard *both sides*, as common fairness pointed out; but have suffered yourselves to be led along by Corruption's sons, as an ass is led by a gipsey; you have spitefully kicked at every man who has endeavoured to set you free; and even now, when your backs are breaking under your burdens, and your bones are sticking through your skins, you appear to feel a new *fit of alarm* at the proposition of that measure, which alone can, by any possibility, afford you relief and security.

Under such circumstances, it is almost impossible for us so far to master our resentment as to entertain a desire that you should now act the part that becomes you; but, to harbour such resentment would be to injure the great cause of the country, and it is, therefore, our duty to bury it, if possible, in everlasting oblivion. For my own part, bred up in the country, and

taught in early life to look towards your order with great respect; remembering the times when your hospitality and benevolence had not been swept away by the tax-gatherer; having still in my recollection so many excellent men, to whose grandfathers, upon the same spots, my grandfathers had yielded cheerful obedience and reverence, it is not without sincere sorrow that I have beheld many of the sons of these men driven from their fathers' mansions, or holding them as little better than tenants or stewards, while the swarms of Placemen, Pensioners, Contractors, and Nabobs, with all the keen habits of their former lives, have usurped a large part of the soil, and wholly changed the manners and even the morals of the country. Upon this occasion, I wish to address you in the temper inspired by the recollection of early impressions, rather than in that which recent facts would naturally dictate. For more than ten years I have been endeavouring to convince you, that that which has now taken place would take place. I have hitherto, with regard to you, laboured in vain; and, one more effort, though it should prove equally useless, will form but a trifling addition to the disappointments already experienced.

My opinion is, that you have now no choice remaining, except that which lies between *a Reform of Parliament* and the *loss of your estates* through the means of taxation; and the soundness of this opinion I will, if you will give me a patient hearing, endeavour to prove in the clearest manner.

Let me first ask you a question or two applicable to this matter. Look, each of you, just around your own neighbourhoods. Take a circumference of thirty or forty miles. Put all the Gentlemen's mansions within that compass down upon paper. Write against each who was the owner *thirty years ago*, and who is the *owner now*. And then tell me, what reason *you* have to hope, that *your sons* will possess your estates? If you have any love for your children, can you take this survey without experiencing the most poignant anguish? Then, look at the numerous little farm-houses tumbling down, or suffered to dwindle into wretched sheds for labourers. Look at the outstretchings of the Metropolis, and see the increase of glittering chariots that rattle through its streets and squares; then turn to the places where numerous hamlets once stood inhabited by happy people; and, then tell me, whether the accumulation of property into great masses, by the means of taxes and loans, have been for the glory or the disgrace of the country? Search the poor-books of fifty years back, and, when you find but *one pauper* for every *hundred paupers* that now are upon those books, tell me whether you can behold the horrid sight without shame for the present and apprehension for the future? The sons of Corruption would fain induce you to believe, that this dreadful change has been produced by a change in the *morals* and *manners* of the labouring people. This is not a very decent charge to make against them at the close of a war, during which those classes have shown so much valour, and have endured with patience so many and such great hardships. But the fact is, that there is *less* drunkenness than formerly; the la-

bourers work harder than their forefathers worked; and, it surely will not be denied, that they are *better educated*, if by education we mean reading and writing. What, then, can have caused the poor-rates to rise, during the sway of the PITTS and the ROSES, from *two millions and a quarter* to *eight millions* a year? What can have been the cause of this increase of human degradation? It is useless, besides being unjust, to rail against the poor. It is clear, that they *ought* to be fed, that they have both a *legal* and *equitable* right to be fed out of the produce of the soil; but, it is also clear, that they *must* be so fed. They never *can* be made to die by thousands quietly under the hedges; and, if they *could*, the evil would be still greater; for then there would be nobody to labour, and the country would become again a wilderness.

It is impossible for you to dwell upon reflections of this kind for ten minutes without being convinced, that there is some great, radical cause of all these evils. And, does it not become you, then, patiently to investigate that cause? If you, however unreasonably, have imbibed a dislike of the person who now addresses you; if you have been addicted, however unjustly, to rail against his motives; if you still think him actuated by mischievous designs, even that opinion ought not, unless you prefer self-destruction to self-preservation, to shut your ears against his *reasonings*, which can belong to no family or name, which must be either *true* or *false*, whether they come from him or any body else; thus to shut your ears would be to act as foolish a part as the refusing of a guinea because tendered to you by a man against whom you happened to have a grudge. If you had a bad opinion of the man who tendered the guinea, you would examine very carefully to ascertain whether it was *gold*; you would weigh it to see whether it was *weight*: but, if you found it of pure quality and of full quantity, you never would be so foolish as to refuse to put it into your pocket.

But, at the present day, there is another and most important reason for your lending a patient ear; for your examining and well weighing what is tendered to you, which reason is this: that your farmers, your tradespeople, your workmen of all sorts are *very attentively reading* upon these subjects. It is quite useless for you to endeavour to discourage and check the progress of political knowledge. That knowledge has gone forth like the rays of the sun bursting a black cloud asunder; and, it is as impossible to destroy the effect of that knowledge as it would be to smother the rays of the sun. Even *error*, when strongly imprinted on the mind, has always been found extremely difficult to efface. What, then, is to efface *truth*, when imprinted on the mind in fair and distinct characters? "The *lower classes*," as they are called by the sons of Corruption, appear, to some, to have become enlightened *all of a sudden*. They have, indeed, *put forth* their proofs of knowledge all of a sudden; but, the truth is, that they have long been *acquiring* that knowledge. They have been patiently and impartially listening; they have been reading attentively what you have been turning your eyes from; and now that the times call them forth, they astonish you with their

political learning. You must, therefore, if it be only in your own defence, now resort to the same sources. It is useless for you, in conjunction with the Pittite Parsons, to shut the *light* out of Reading Rooms and great Booksellers' shops. It makes its way through the country in spite of your and their threats. It has been, by a singular process, shut out of Mess-Rooms and Ward-Rooms. But all these measures have only served to keep the higher or richer classes in political ignorance, while the middle and lower classes, as you call them, have been acquiring light, and improving in knowledge. The mass of information which has been discovered at the several public-meetings seems quite surprizing. The Mayors, Provosts, Boroughreeves, and others, who have refused to call public meetings, imagined, I dare say, that the *people* were nothing *of themselves*. They have found their mistake by this time, and they must have been ready to gnaw their very fingers off to see the accounts of those proceedings, which have been published, and in which a degree of talent and of wisdom has appeared, surpassing, and very far surpassing, any thing that was ever before brought forth at Public Meetings in this or any other country. At Nottingham, the Corporate Body, like men of sense, have cordially acted with the people; but, at Manchester, Wigan, Boston, Lynn, Glasgow, Paisley, Renfrew, and divers other places, all persons in authority have either thrown obstacles in the way, or have, at the very least, refused, to participate. This, however, has not at all held the people in check. They know their rights, and they have come forward and exercised them with talent and spirit, and, at the same time, with the greatest possible prudence. Must not the natural consequence be, that the people will drop that respect for the rich which they have hitherto entertained?—And, is not this a most awful warning to the *Country Gentlemen?* Must they not see in these instances a proof, that, unless *they* place themselves at the head of the people, in the work of Reform, the people will find leaders amongst their own body? Must they not see even a *greater danger;* must they not see, that, if they still keep aloof, they will, at last, become objects, not altogether of contempt, but also of *resentment?* When the rich and the powerful of both the political factions united met in the open air at MAIDSTONE to propose an address to the Prince on the Marriage of his Daughter, they had no more idea of an opposition from the *people* than they had of an opening of the earth beneath them. What must have been their "*surprize* and *regret*," when they found the people, not that shouting, huzzaing rabble that followed Old Blucher about the streets, but a well-informed body, who saw to the bottom of the subject, who knew how to trace their own sufferings down from the grants of public-money, and who, having spirit equal to their understanding, hissed the rich and powerful addressers from the open air into a room in a tavern! Will not instances like these satisfy you, that the time is arrived for you to show yourselves? If they will not, you must be in more than Egyptian darkness.

But, and this brings me to the main point as concerns you, what do the peo-

ple ask for? They do not ask for any one thing, in the obtaining of which *you* are not as deeply interested as they are. They do not ask for your *property to be taken from you;* they do not ask for your *rents to be reduced.* On the contrary, they ask for that which would prevent your total ruin and the annihilation of your very names. Your conduct is most surprising, and not to be accounted for upon any supposition short of that of the existence of an almost self-devotion to destruction. You have seen a law passed to make a tax on your land *perpetual;* then, upon the back of that, you have seen another passed, under the name of a *redemption of that tax*, to make you purchase the tax, or to enable the government to *sell it to any body else.* And, thus, you have been compelled to purchase back part of your own estates, or to sell a part of them in order to prevent the government from selling to other individuals a rent charge upon the whole. In some instances the right to receive the tax has been bought by individuals; in others you have sold part of the estates entailed upon your sons, in order to buy the property in the remainder. And, in all this you appear to have very quietly acquiesced! You now hear your *rents attacked;* not by the *people*, but by some of the Correspondents of the *Board of Agriculture*, which Board is a *Government* Board, and maintained at the public expence. Rents! These persons complain of your *high* rents; and they propose, that they should be *reduced.* They say, that high rents are the cause of the national misery, taking care to keep the Debt and Taxes and Change of Currency out of sight; and, if they mean any thing practical, they must mean, that you ought to be *compelled* to lower your rents; or in other words, to surrender another large part of your estates! And yet, you appear to feel no sort of *alarm* at proceedings and propositions like these! You, wise men that you are, are not to be awakened to a sense of danger by anything but the expression of the people's wish to have a voice in the choosing of those who are to make laws and impose taxes!

That, if no change take place, your estates will pass away from you is not now attempted to be denied by any one who has the ability to put pen to paper. And, yet you remain stagnant as the weeds of Lethe! The operation of the *funding and army system* upon your estates is just as visible as the operation of lading water out of one bucket and putting into another; that is to say, it is thus visible to all eyes but yours; for, if it were visible to you, your conduct would denounce you as downright ideots. You see your incomes fall off; you see your tenants ruined; you see all the labourers become paupers; you are compelled to shut up your windows, to turn off your servants, to lay down your horses and carriages, to hang or drown your dogs, to cease all hospitality, and finally to abandon to the rain, the wind and the bats the mansions, in which you were born, and which, only in your immediate fathers' life times, were scenes of plenty, hilarity and happiness. You slide into some patched-up farm house and vainly hope, by assuming the occupation, to share in the profits, of the farmer; or you hide

your diminished heads in some gaudy box, where art is at strife with nature, in the skirts of the Metropolis, and where, instead of the voice of your hounds, you are cheered with the rumble of the convenient short coach which takes you to steal your politics while you are snapping up your dinner; or, unable to endure this degradation in the land of your fore-fathers, you decamp to some foreign shore, where, while you linger out, in as tate of voluntary exile, a life of shabby gentility, your children imbibe the rudiments of that mongrel education, which well prepares them to wander through the world, cursed with poverty and pride, loaded with contempt and bereft of the benefits of compassion.

All this you know; all this you see before your eyes; all this many of you are now actually experiencing; and yet not a hand, not a tongue, have you moved in order to get rid of the cause of your ruin! If there be ten men, composing a community; if each has a certain portion of property; if two out of the ten contrive, by any means to appropriate to themselves a certain large part of the property of the other eight every year; is it not clear as day-light, that, in a very few years, the two must have *all the property*, and, of course, the eight have no property at all? And yet you will not see, that the Taxgatherer, who takes a large part of your incomes and hands it over to the Placemen, the Pensioners, the Grantees, the Fundholders, and the Army, are actually engaged in such a transfer! You will not see this; but you see dreadful dangers in a Reform of the Parliament, which would very nearly put an end to the transfer!

Well! But you do see it. You see it and feel it. You know, that, in a short time, you must be ruined, if no change take place. The delusive hope, that it is *a sudden transition from war to peace* has been dispelled; you see that the cause is as permanent as the 60 millions of taxes and the 8 or 10 millions of poor-rates. You do, at last, confess, that the loss of your estates, of which I warned you more than ten years ago, has taken place in part and is now upon the eve of consummation. You wish not to be wholly stript. You would, if you could, save the remnant of your property. Why, then, do you not join the *people*, who with undivided voice are praying for that change, which they look to as the only means of affording effectual present relief and future security, and which certainly is as necessary to you as to them?

The Press of Corruption call upon you to keep aloof upon these grounds: They say, that the standing army is necessary to preserve the peace of the country; that the present amount of Civil List, Sinecures, Pensions, Grants and Salaries is also necessary; and that, to reduce the interest of the Debt would be a *breach of national faith* and *a robbery*.

Now, the Reformers say, and I for one, that a Reform would cause the peace of the country never to be broken, or attempted to be broken, except in such a trifling degree as to be easily restored by peace-officers. We say, that, as to Sinecures, Pensions, &c. a Reformed Parliament would reduce them to the standard

of strict *public services*. We say, that, as to Salaries and Pay, they would be reduced in the proportion in which the wages of labourers and mechanics and manufacturers have been reduced. We say, that, if we were to stop here, the drain upon your estates would become *much less* than it is. But, I am not for stopping here. I am for making that reduction of the interest of the Debt, which has been stigmatized as a *breach of national faith*, and, by others, as *a robbery*; and, I will endeavour to prove, that it is neither one nor the other.

At several of the public meetings it has been resolved, that the Debt is *not national*; that those only owe the money, who have *voted* for those *who borrowed* the money; and that those who have filled the *seats* owe the Debt. Without attempting to enter into this question at present, I shall proceed to say, that those who have lent their money to the government were the best judges of the *security* they received for re-payment. They very well knew, that they had no other security than that which the power of collecting a sufficiency of taxes gave them; and, the simple question is, whether, in order to collect a sufficiency of taxes, the nation is bound to hazard the very lives of a great part of the people. I say, that it is not; I say, that the safety and happiness of millions is to be preferred to the safety and happiness of thousands; and, I say, that this is a principle that is consonant with every notion of justice and humanity.

But, let us look a little into the facts of this case. There are *some* of the Fundholders, who lent their money in a currency one pound of which was equal in value to a pound of the present day; but, all those who lent the Government money after the stoppage of the Bank in 1797, lent no such a thing. They lent a *paper-money* of *inferior value*; and now, when the currency has been again raised in value, is the nation bound to pay the lenders as much of *this* paper as they lent of an *inferior paper*? If the lending had been in pieces of gold of *one* ounce weight each, would it be *a robbery* to make payment for ten pieces in five pieces of *two* ounces weight each? If the lending had been in bushels of wheat at 9s. a bushel, would it be *a robbery* to make payment for ten bushels in five bushels at 18s. each? And, though the price of wheat is now more than half what it used to be when the money was lent, this is merely owing to a *short crop*, and, if we take *all* the articles of produce, lean stock, meat, wool, flax, and corn, they do not sell *for half* the price they sold for when the main part of the money was borrowed. And yet they call it *robbery*, if we do not continue to pay *two for one!*

Nor had the *nation* any thing to do in changing the value of the currency. The Governor and Directors of the Bank Company were bound by law to pay the amount of their notes to the bearer upon demand *in gold and silver*. They issued such large quantities of Notes, that, in 1797, when the holders of the Notes went for payment, the Governor and Directors went to Pitt and told him *their fears for the safety of their concern* Pitt procured an Order of Council authorising them to refuse to pay their notes! This was all *unlawful*; but, the Parliament passed an

act to protect the Governor and Directors and Pitt and the Council against the consequences of this great and memorable breach of the laws. This Bank Company are amongst the very greatest of the *Fundholders*, and they cry aloud about *breach of faith*, about *robbery*, because Mr. Preston and others have proposed to pay them no longer the value of two bushels of wheat for the value of one bushel of wheat!

The Bank paper, including the Country paper, which depended upon that of the London Bank, has now been more than half *drawn in*. Whose *fault* was that? Not the *nation's*. The nation had no hand in the stoppage of 1797, nor had it any hand in drawing in the paper. The whole has been done by those who manage the paper-money; and yet, the nation at large are to be called *robbers*, if they assert, that they ought not to be wholly ruined by the operations of these managers!

Let us take the case of the common *day-labourer*. Infinite pains have been taken by the sons of Corruption to persuade the labouring classes, that *they* do not pay any part of the *Debt*. Oh, no! great care is taken, these corrupt men tell them, *not to tax THEM*. Great care is taken to lay the weight upon the shoulders of those who are *able to bear it*. Great care is taken not to make the poor man contribute towards the support of the splendid Sinecure Placeman and Pensioner; and these corrupt men say, that the war, having been carried on for the *protection of property*, men of *property* are, and ought to be, liable to pay the interest of the Debt which was contracted, that is to say, *the money that was borrowed and expended upon the war*. If this really were the case, and if the taxes paid by you and your yeomanry-cavalry tenants, did not at all affect the labouring classes, it would be a matter of much less consequence than it is. But, this is *not* the case. The Press of Corruption tell the labouring people a gross and wicked falsehood when it tells them, that they are not taxed. They *are* taxed, and pretty handsomely too. The Malt, Beer, Leather, Salt, Sugar, Tea, Tobacco, Soap, Candles, and Spirits, of which the farmer's man, the artizan, the mechanic, and the manufacturer, and their families, consume, and must consume, a very large part of all that is consumed in the country; these articles all pay a heavy tax, and, indeed, the taxes raised upon the *Malt*, *Hops*, *and Beer* alone amount to a greater sum, and a much greater sum, than the taxes on all the *Land* and all the *Houses*, all the *Windows*, all the *Carriages*, all the *Horses*, all the *Servants*, all the *Dogs*, and all the other taxes imposed on the rich and not on the poor. Let us, however, come to the *proof;* for this is a great matter. Let me go to *the Book;* the Book of all Books; the Book of Taxes! Here I have it before me. It is an account of what the Government received from the people in England, Scotland, and Wales, *during the last year of our lives*. It received, for the abovementioned things, as follows:

	POUNDS.
For Beer, Hops and Malt	9,588,641
For Land, Houses, Windows, Carriages, Horses, Mules, Servants, Bailiffs, Waiters, Powder Tax, Dogs, &c. &c. only	7,716,209

So that the Beer, Hops and Malt *alone*, which are chiefly used by those who are called the "*Lower Classes*," pay nearly one fourth part more every year than all the Land, Houses, Windows, and the other things just named. And, yet the Corrupt Press would fain make the Labouring Classes believe that *they* pay no taxes, and that *great care* has been taken not to lay any burdens upon those who are not well able to *bear them!* And, this is the reason, forsooth, why the *poor* ought not to have a vote at elections!

But, I am wandering from the point immediately before me, which was to show how the common day-labourer stands affected with regard to the *Debt*. The expences of the Government may be divided into two heads:—*First*, the army, navy, civil list, pensions, &c. and, *Second*, the Debt. The taxes required to pay the army, navy, &c. amount to about 22 millions a year; and the taxes required to pay the interest of the Debt to about 44 millions a year; so that the charge for the Debt is twice as great as the charge for every thing else. The commonest day-labourer pays, in taxes, according to Mr. PRESTON's computation, *ten pounds a year*, if he earn eighteen pounds a year, and, of course his ten pounds are divided nearly as follows:

	£	s.	d.
For Army, Civil List, &c.	3	6	8
For Debt	6	13	4
	10	0	0

Now, when the greater part of the Debt-money was borrowed, the labouring man used to receive at Botley from 15*s.* to 18*s.* a week; and he now receives only from 9*s.* to 10*s.* a week. And, if we reckon the time that he now loses for *want of work*, which used never to be the case, his wages have, in fact, especially if we include the want of work for his wife and children, been *reduced one half*. And, is he still to pay the 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* a year on account of the *Debt?* When the Debt-money was borrowed, it took only about *eight weeks' wages in the year* to pay his portion of the charge for the Debt; but now it takes *sixteen weeks' wages in the year;* and the Fundholder can have these sixteen weeks' wages for the same quantity of money that he could have had eight weeks' wages when the Debt-money was borrowed. And yet they call it a *robbery* to reduce the payment from sixteen weeks' wages to eight weeks' wages! Nay, they call it a *robbery* to reduce the Fundholder *one per cent;* that is to say, they call it a robbery to give him more than the amount of *twelve* weeks' wages for the *eight* weeks' wages which he lent to the government! This they stigmatize as a robbery; this they call a breach of national faith; against this they cry as loudly as parson Parks cried, the other day, against the "*horrid* and *diabolical* plot," which he had discovered in a hackney coach, and which consisted, I suppose, in the entwining of ribbons of colours red, white and blue!

It is impossible to take this view of the matter and not to be convinced, that things cannot go on in their present train for any length of time. The question, therefore, is not, whether all shall remain as it is or a change take place; for a change of *some sort* must take place;

and, the only question is, of *what sort* that change shall be.

I believe, that most men are convinced, that, if a Reform of the Parliament had taken place in 1792, we never should have seen a war against the people of France; that we should have suffered that people to settle their affairs in their own way; that we should not have expended *million* after *million* on the Bourbon fugitives and French aristocratic and ecclesiastical Emigrants, while our own list of paupers was increasing at so dreadful a rate; and that we should never have heard of votes for monuments to commemorate the *glory* of having restored the Bourbons and the Inquisition. I believe, that most men, high as well as low, are now convinced of this. I believe also, that the same conviction prevails as to the impossibility of sufficiently reducing the expences of the country, and, of course, the taxes, *without a Reform.* At any rate, the people, the great body of the people, are now most thoroughly convinced, that their miseries can never have an end, until this Reform shall take place. They now clearly see what are the real causes of their sufferings; they see that they arise from taxation and the management of the Paper-money; they have too much sense to believe that Soup-Kettles can form a permanent establishment, and too much spirit to endure the thought of living all their lives upon alms; they laugh, and well they may, at the idea of *Saving Banks*, where they are to provide for sickness and old age by putting by *a penny or two a week*, while each labourer is paying *about four shillings a week in taxes.* In short, they now, in spite of all the endeavours to "*irritate* and *mislead,*" clearly see their way, and are coolly and firmly pressing forward with petitions for *Reform.*

And, why are you alarmed at this?—Do you fear the consequences of putting an end to that mass of bribery and corruption and immorality of every sort, which now attend elections? How can *you* be injured by *annual parliaments* and *universal suffrage?* If the Members be really the choice of the people, what is it to *you* how often they are elected? Does *universal suffrage* frighten you? Why should it, if *universal taxation* does not? By the word *universal* it is impossible that we should mean *universal* in its *literal* sense. We often say, that "*all the world*" knows such or such a thing. But, by these words, we do not mean, that all the people in all countries, savages and all, know it. The word *universal* is made use of to save the repetition of a great many words. We explain, that we mean, that every *man*, who is of age, and who is untainted with any infamous crime, should have a vote; and, when we have so clearly shown, that even the common day-labourer is so heavily *taxed*, we wait to hear the arguments to prove that he ought not to be permitted to have a vote in the choosing of those by whom he is so taxed, and such arguments we have not yet heard.

The *practicability* is all that can possibly remain in doubt, for the *justice* of the thing is clear. Some persons, very sincere and very able friends of Reform, are disposed to stop at *house-holders*; that is to say, all men who are masters of a house, or occupy a house, whether

they pay any *direct* rates or taxes, or whether they do not. This would be doing a great deal; for, as it would include all cottagers and all married journeymen, it would, perhaps, satisfy the people. But, certainly, nothing one inch short of this ever will satisfy them; and, in this case, the *ballot* appears necessary to preserve the free exercise of this invaluable right; for, without the ballot, what is to protect the farmer and the householder against their landlord? In America, where so very small a part of the farmers are *tenants*, and where the labouring classes are so very independent, they have still adhered to the ballot, which, besides the protection it affords to tenants and other dependent persons, has the excellent effect, in many cases, of preventing strife amongst neighbours and relations. The ABBÉ MABLY, a French writer of great eminence, in his Letters to Mr. JOHN ADAMS on the American Constitutions, finds fault of the *ballot*, as being a provision against *an evil that ought not to exist;* and he predicts, that it will tend to *degrade* the people. He wrote in 1786; but, his prediction has not yet been fulfilled. However, I would break with nobody on the subject of the *ballot*, nor do I believe the petitioners in general would. I have confidence enough in the honesty and spirit of my countrymen to believe that without the ballot, they would act as became freeman.

But, after all, let us have the subject *fairly discussed;* let a *Bill* be brought in, and let us when we see its provisions, examine whether they be good or bad. Let free discussion take place, and I will engage, that we arrive at the truth. And, what has any one, who means rightly, to *fear* from such a reform? It contemplates no hostility to any lawful prerogative or privilege; but, on the contrary, it fully contemplates the real enjoyment of both by those who are entitled to them. Are you afraid, that such a Reform would fill the Commons', or People's, House with low and foolish men? If you are, upon what are your fears founded? Has a representative system, from top to toe, produced this effect in America? No: the four persons who have been *Presidents,* Messrs. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, were the four men most distinguished in their country for political talent and wisdom, equal to any men upon earth as to private character, and all of them possessing estates, to which, *unaugmented,* they retired at the termination of their public duties. The two Houses of Congress are filled, with very few exceptions, by men of *some fortune* as well as men of distinguished talent. Why, then, should you suppose, that the people of England, if free to choose, would fix *their* choice on men of *no property* and *no talent!*

But, are you afraid, that the king would be compelled to put his authority into the hands of men having no *noble blood* in their veins, and that, thus, the ancient families of the kingdom would have the shame of submitting to the sway of up-starts? Before you express such a fear, you should ask yourselves, who and whence came those who have this sway in their hands NOW. The Lord Chancellor is the son of a Coal-Merchant; Lord Sidmouth the son of a Doctor of Physic; Lord Liverpool the son of a very

clever man, who was once a writer in reviews and other such publications; Mr. Vansittart was, not many years ago, a Sessions Lawyer in Berkshire; Mr. Canning's origin I have no certain trace of; Mr. Huskisson is a farmer's son, and has been an Apothecary or Banker's Clerk; and our worthy friend Old George Rose, at whose heels the Baronets and 'Squires of Hampshire follow like well-trained spaniels, was a Purser in the Navy. Come, come, then! Cheer up! Don't be frightened! What is it that has raised these men, and many others who could be mentioned, to such a height of power? Why, their application to business; their industry; their store of knowledge calculated for the purposes of supporting the system; their superior talents of the sort that are required to carry on that which they are wanted to carry on. If, therefore, the notion of attaching importance to mere *birth* were to be admitted to be wise instead of being foolishness itself, what have you to fear on this score from the proposed Reform? Nay, I see no reason at all, why the present ministers, with an exception or two, should not remain as they are. A reformed parliament would certainly leave the king perfectly unfettered in his choice; and, it is the evils of the present system that we want to get rid of, and not of the *men* who carry it on. For, as you must have observed, amongst all the numerous petitions for Reform, not one expresses a wish to produce a *change of the ministers*. The WHIG press has been, indeed, labouring at this point; but, its efforts have been so contemptible in point of effect, that not a single petition contains any such thought. Pitt, in his better days, and before his connection with Dundas, said, that without a reform of the parliament, no minister in England could be *honest*, by which he meant, I suppose, that no minister could act freely and effectually for the good of the country; and this appears to be the opinion of the people.

Now, then, if no other considerations had any weight with you, do you not perceive, that there is danger to yourselves in keeping aloof from so many thousands and hundreds of thousands of sturdy men as are now so eagerly seeking for the accomplishment of this great wish of their hearts? You cannot deny, if the question be put home to you, that you *lament* the events of the last twenty-five years. You cannot say, that you believe the present distress and misery to be *temporary*. You cannot point to any ground of *hope* of an alteration for the better, if the present system be persevered in. You can hardly endure the idea of seeing your estates wholly pass away from you. And, if you were, or are, insensible to every other feeling, do you not dread the thought of being held in contempt or abhorrence by the Labouring Classes? And yet, must not this be the case, if you still resolve to keep aloof? They have, every where, with their accustomed deference to their superiors in rank and property, been anxiously looking towards those superiors. They have respectfully urged *them* to take the lead; and, they have, every where except at Nottingham and Norwich and in the County of Cornwall, met with refusal, and, in some cases, with insult and abuse. This,

however, has not prevented them from exercising their right of petition, and, in their cool, decorous and able manner of doing it, they have given those superiors a lesson which ought to be a warning to them in future. That men should, by false pride, be rendered so stupid as to cast away proffered influence and power would appear incredible were not the fact attested by undeniable evidence. At CARLISLE the Labouring Classes have made a formal and written application *to their employers* to place themselves at their head in the work of petitioning. The document is curious and interesting, and is as follows. The application appears to have been a *Circular*.

"SIR,—We the Operative —— in your "employ, considering the necessity of a "Reform in Parliament to be the only "means of relieving the present existing "distress of the country, *call upon you to* "*come forward along with your Brother* "*Manufacturers* of other Trades in call-"ing a General Public meeting to express "the grievances which the people lie "under and the necessity of Redress.— "Sir,—It is the full intention of the Peo-"ple to Petition the King, likewise the "Legislature—and if you absolutely re-"fuse to act in a public capacity in the "business, we shall be *under the dis-*"*agreeable necessity of taking the cause* "*in hand ourselves*—But we *fondly hope* "you will accede to our reasonable re-"quest and come forward to use every "lawful means in your power to redress "your *own grievances* and the *grievances* "*of your Servants.*

"And Your *Petitioners will ever* "*Pray.*"

Now, I should be glad to know, what proceeding could be more proper, more sensible than this? What more reasonable, what more fair and honest? And yet, it appears, that the Employers, though *not* with insult and abuse, declined the invitation upon the vague assertion, that, "*no benefit* could be expected to result" from such a public meeting. The *insult* and *abuse* were left to be supplied by the proprietor of the COURIER, who was once himself a *journeyman taylor*, and who now, affecting airs of *high-blood*, treats these sensible, modest and suffering people as if they were so many curs, fit to be fed only on carrion. Do *you* think, that THIS is the way to conciliate the people, to cheer them with hope, to induce them to exercise fortitude and patience, and to strengthen the natural ties which bind them to their superiors in rank and wealth? No: but it is the way to burst those ties asunder and to destroy them for ever. A Reform will take place, or it will not. If it do not, if it be finally refused, and that, too, as these vile writers would recommend, without a fair and full and candid hearing, what disappointment, what heart-burnings, what hatreds, what resentments, what combustibles are here gathering together! And, if it do take place, in what contempt will the mass of the people hold those whom they, with that modesty which is inseparable from true courage, now look up to as their superiors! And, therefore, in keeping aloof from the people in this the hour of their distress and anxiety, are you acting the part of men who from a just estimate of the means of preserving even your own property and character, to say nothing of the peace, happiness, and

power of our country, which might as far surpass all others in prosperity as it does in enterprize, talent, and renown?

The country, instead of being disturbed, as the truly *seditious* writers on the side of Corruption would fain make us believe; instead of being "*irritated*" by the agitation of the question of Reform, is kept, by the hope, which Reform holds out to it, in a state of tranquillity, wholly unparalleled in the history of the world, under a similar pressure of suffering. Of this fact, the sad scenes at DUNDEE are a strong and remarkable instance. At the great and populous towns of Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool, and many, many others, where the people are suffering in a degree that makes the heart sink within one to think of, they have had their meetings to petition for Reform; they have agreed on petitions; hope has been left in their bosoms; they have been inspired with patience and fortitude; and *all is tranquil.* But, at *Dundee*, where a *partial meeting* had been held early in November, and *where a gentleman who moved for Reform had been borne down*, there violence has broken forth, houses have been plundered, and property and life exposed to all sort of perils, and this, too, amongst the sober, the sedate, the reflecting, the prudent, the moral people of Scotland!

One would think, that this instance alone would rouse you from your unaccountable state of torpidity. The pensioned Burke insolently said, that the King held his crown *in contempt* of the Reformers of 1789. You cannot hold your property *in contempt* of the people; and, if you could do it, what would your property be worth? Yet, every day that passes over your heads, is, by your keeping aloof, separating you more and more widely from the people, the great mass of whom are well convinced, that you have only to place yourselves at their head to obtain for them the full accomplishment of their wishes; and, what is more, they would be satisfied with *less* if speedily obtained by your assistance.

Thus, it appears to me, that every consideration, whether as to self or to country, calls on you to come forth and cordially join in the work of obtaining a Reform. The approaching session of parliament will, if I am not much deceived, be the most important that this country ever saw. Its measures will finally pronounce on *your* fate; and, what sort of fate that will be will wholly depend on yourselves.

WM. COBBETT.

The next Register will contain an Address to the CLERGY. Also the Sequel of the SURPRIZING PLOTS.

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COBBETT's WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

129] LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1817. [130

TO HAWKERS.

At Wolverhampton, I am told, a man has been taken into custody, and held in prison till the next day, and then discharged. This man was selling my Register in that town, on the market day. If he will come to London, I will pay his outside coach hire and other expences, in order that steps may be taken, to obtain him redress, or, at least, to make a full exposure of the matter. He must bring with him the full Christian and Sirnames of the Magistrate who caused him to be imprisoned, and must be ready to make an affidavit of all the circumstances. --At Coventry, some proceedings, of a somewhat similar nature, have taken place, I wish both the men who have been arrested at Coventry and again discharged, also to come to London, prepared with all the names and dates, and every thing necessary to the adoption of proper proceedings. I wish all these persons to be here on, or immediately after, the eighteenth of February, but not before.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Some parts of the last Number, owing to an error of the press, were marked Volume 33 in place of Volume 32.—The whole of the numbers, beginning with No. 15 of Vol. 31, in short all the numbers of the Register which have been published in a cheap form, are now reprinting and will be ready for delivery in the course of next week. They will all then be in the pamphlet form; and will make, when put together, a nice little cheap book.---As soon as possible, the former part of Volume 31, that is to say, from the month of June last up to the time when the Cheap Registers began, will be reprinted, and will be sold for about Twenty-pence! so that, then, every body will be enabled to have the whole of Volume 31 for about *Four Shillings*; and those who may already have the latter part of the numbers of that volume, in the pamphlet form, may have the former part of that volume for about Twenty pence, as I said before.---I have altered my plan with regard to *Paper against Gold*. I shall make an addition to it, bringing the history of Paper Money down to the present time, and also of the debt, taxes, &c. I shall print two editions of it, one, upon fine large paper, to be retailed for *ten* shillings; and one, for the use of *schools*, and of *young persons* in general, to be sold retail for *four* shillings, bound in boards.—This new arrangement will cause a week's delay in the Publication.—I am also preparing a work to be entitled "COBBETT's PARLIAMENTARY REGISTER," which will include a complete abridgment of the Proceedings of the whole Session in one Volume, with all useful *public accounts*, &c. This will be published at the close of the Session, and will be sold for *ten* shillings on large paper, and *four* shillings upon the common paper.

A LETTER
TO
LORD SIDMOUTH.

On calling out the Yeomanry, &c.—On the Prince's Speech.—The Vulgar have eyes to see.—Base Demagogues.—Lord Cochrane's motion in defence of the Reformers.—Liverpool Vestry Extraordinary.

London, 30th Jan. 1817.

MY LORD—It is now about 27 years, since BURKE, who soon afterwards became a great pensioner for life, with a reversionary pension to his wife, and on whose *executors*, for *three lives*, two large grants of the public money, annually paid out of the taxes, are settled; it is now about 27 years since that man drew his quill against the Parliamentary Reformers, whom he designated by all sorts of foul appellations, and, to stifle the principles of whom, he cried aloud for that war, which, after having, by its final success on the Continent of Europe, restored the Bourbons and the Inquisition, has left this country in a state of misery, which I believe to be without a parallel in the history of civilized man. It is now about 24 years, since Mr. GREY (now Lord Grey) presented to the House of Commons a Petition on the subject of the state of the representation, and praying for a Reform of that House. That Petition has laid on

the table of the House from that day to this, and nothing has been done respecting it. No one has ever attempted to deny its allegations, or any part of them. It is now about 24 years since the sword was drawn, and the leagues entered into against the people of France, and since new, and heretofore unheard of, penal statutes were passed to keep down the spirit of *Jacobinism*, as it was called, but which was visible only in the shape of *Reform*.

Now, my Lord, look back over these years of prosecutions, imprisonments, transportings, hangings, quarterings, and bloodshed, in every way in which blood can be shed! Look back across this scene of human woe, and reflect on the situation of this kingdom at the outset of the contest! In the year 1792, before the fatal war begun, the annual expence on account of the *Debt* was less than *nine millions*; that charge is now more than *forty-four millions*. The annual amount of the poor-rates was then about *two and a quarter* millions; that amount was, last year, *eight millions*, and, this year, it will, probably, be nearer twelve millions than eight. *Crimes*, the increase of which is the most certain as well as the most lamentable proof of an increase of the misery and degradation of a people, have increased in a degree equal to the increase of the Debt and Taxes. The whole of the taxes, in 1792, amounted to less than *sixteen millions*. Last year they amounted to nearly *seventy millions*. We do not possess an account of all the *crimes* in so accurate a way; but, from returns laid before the House of Commons up to 1809, it appeared, that, taking the country all through, crimes had increased with the increase of taxes; and, from a paper, transmitted to me some time ago by Mr. W. GOODMAN of WARWICK, and which paper he also transmitted to Sir Richard Phillips, who has inserted it in his excellent Magazine for this month, it appears, that, for the County of Warwick, the number of prisoners tried in 1792 was *one hundred and six*; and that the number of prisoners tried for the same County in 1816 was *five hundred and twenty*. There can be little doubt, that the increase of crimes is in nearly the same proportion throughout the whole kingdom; and, surely, a more melancholy fact never was made known to the world.

When the war was *at an end*; when the "*new doctrines*," as they were called, had been trampled under foot by our government and its allies upon the Continent, your Lordship must remember into what insolent *strains of triumph* the TIMES newspaper and its readers burst forth! However, these persons, not yet satisfied, then began to put forth their declarations, that the republic of *America* must also be subdued: they said (or, at least WALTER did), in direct terms, that it was necessary to the tranquillity of the world, that the American Government should be *overthrown*; that "this "*mischievous example* of the success "of *Democratic Rebellion*" should be destroyed.—And, all the London newspapers published, under the title of a speech, delivered by SIR JOSEPH YORKE (one of the Lords of the Admiralty) in the House of Commons, just after the fall of Napoleon, a declaration, that more was yet to do, for that *James Madison was not yet dethroned!*

Alas! My Lord, you know but too well how that war was carried on, and how it ended! And you also know, that Mr. MADISON, after a most glorious career as the Chief Magistrate of a free and happy people, has now retired to spend his old age as a private citizen, beholding his country settled in perfect peace and uncommon prosperity.

And, how does your Lordship, at the end of this quarter of a century of war, find *Old England*? How does she stand at the close of this long contest against the principles of democracy, as we called them? How has peace found her? In 1814, when the Kings and "Old Blucher" were feasted and huzzaed, and when the country was all in a blaze with bon-

fires and illuminations and fires to roast oxen; in that hour of the triumph of WALTER and STEWART and all the swarm of corruption; in that hour of drunken joy, I, for my part, not only mourned, but I openly expressed my mourning, and I gave my *reasons* for that mourning, and put them upon indelible record. I saw that my country was ruined; I saw that days of deep and lasting misery were at hand. When the overseer of my tything came to ask my subscription towards the ox, which had been led by my door, decorated with orange-coloured ribbons: "No," said I, "Mr. HAINES, "I will keep my money for the time, "when this bawling and feasting and "boozing will be turned into cries of "distress and starvation, which time "is at no great distance." Mr. Haines's civility prevented him from laughing in my face, in which respect he was more civil than the public in general. But, my Lord, a short time has proved my apprehensions to have been but too well founded. I had long seen, that the system of Paper-Money and Debts and Funds and Standing Armies could not go on in *peace*, without the utter ruin and starvation of all labouring classes. This was *proved* in "PAPER "AGAINST GOLD," and the principles had been asserted and enforced by me many years before. It was under this conviction, that, so early as the year 1804, when the annual charge of the Debt was not much more than *the half of its present amount*, I most anxiously laboured to produce *a change of system*. After thirteen years of unpopularity and obloquy, I have lived to see the truth of my opinions *recognized* by ninety-nine hundredths of the people, and not openly *denied*, or, if denied at all, by mere *assertion*, unsupported by any show of argument. I have lived to see *more than a hundred public newspapers* adopting all my formerly reprobated doctrines about the Debt, the Sinking Fund, the Funding System, the effects of Taxation, the Pauperizing degradation, and, indeed, the whole of that set of doctrines, by which I was distinguished only to be censured or ridiculed.

Now, my Lord, this is a wonderful change! It is a complete revolution in the mind of a whole nation. A far more important revolution it is than that of 1688, which very justly expelled one Royal Family and introduced another in its stead; and, if there be any two points, upon which men are now more unanimous than upon any of the others, connected with politics, it is these two; namely, *first, that taxation produces misery, and misery crimes;* and, *second*, that the only effectual remedy for these dreadful evils, under which the nation is now smarting, writhing and groaning, is, *a radical Reform in the Commons', or People's, House of Parliament.* Upon these points the public mind is made up. The truth of the positions has been demonstrated so clearly; and the impression of this truth upon the public mind is so deeply engraven, that it is impossible for any human power to remove it.

This being the state of things, it is hardly necessary for me to tell your Lordship, that your Letter to the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Leicester, as published in the COURIER of Saturday last, has given me an uncommon degree of pain, and especially as being signed with *your* name. Saving much of disapprobation, which I have often expressed with as much openness as I dared, I have had some things to say in cordial approbation of your Lordship as one of the servants of the king; and, I shall always recollect, that, when, just upon the eve of that trial, which ended in so heavy a punishment on me, some of the base wretches of the press had asserted, that you paid me money for writing a paper, in 1803, calling upon the people to defend their country against the menaced attack of the French; I shall always recollect, with what promptitude and kindness your Lordship, in a paper under your own hand, enabled me to refute this base and malignant accusation. There is also another fact, which, in justice to

your Lordship, I ought, at this critical moment, to state. And that is, that GILLRAY, the *caricaturist*, of St. JAMES's Street, who, when your Lordship became prime minister in 1801, exhibited you in such odious colours, confessed to me, that he did it, *because you had stopped his pension of two hundred pounds a year*. I could mention *others*, whose enmity your Lordship was honoured with on the same ground; and, my real belief now is, that if you had had a reformed Parliament to co-operate with you, England would have recovered from her blows, and would have been, at this day, a flourishing, happy and contented nation. But, alas! the *system* was too strong for your wishes. You were compelled, either to sink, or to go with the stream.

In your letter to the Lord Lieutenant, you call upon him to recommend to the Magistrates to swear in the *respectable house-holders* as *Special Constables* for a space of time not less than *three months*, and also to communicate to the commanders of *Yeomanry Corps* the wish of the government that they would hold their Corps in a state of *preparation* to afford *prompt assistance to the Civil Authorities*, in case of necessity; and your Lordship tells him, that the *reason* is, that it is, "*expedient*, under the "*present circumstances of the Country*, that the Civil Power should be "strengthened." This being the *reason* for the measure, it is of great importance to inquire, what those *circumstances* of the Country *really* are.

Great must have been your Lordship's grief, when you put your hand to this Letter; for, what does it say? Why, that, after a quarter of a century of taxation, pauperising, loans and wars, a peace has been obtained with all the world, and that, at the end of more than two years of this peace, such a measure as this is necessary, and that the ordinary powers of the magistrates and peace officers, great as they have been made of late years, are even now insufficient to insure the public tranquillity; and that, too, though we have a large standing regular army, such as our forefathers never dreamt of, and while we have actually a large army of Englishmen in France for the purpose of preserving tranquillity *there*, and of upholding the family of Bourbon. This is what your Lordship's letter will say to all the world.

What then *are* these "Circum-"stances of the Country?" Are they such as to call for military force? But I will postpone the consideration of this question till I come to offer your Lordship some remarks on the latter part of the SPEECH, delivered to the Parliament on Tuesday last.—That Tuesday, my Lord, was a very important day. It will, hereafter be so considered; and, as I was a considerable actor in that day's affairs, I will by and by give the history of them, as far as they came within my knowledge, without the smallest disguise or reservation. I will tell your Lordship all the *secrets* of the Reformers, and then you will see clearly what sort of measures are necessary in order to put them down.

The first part of the Speech I shall pass over, the war against Algiers and the wars in Hindostan being of not so much importance in my eyes as the case of only one single starving English manufacturer. But the state of the *revenue* and of the *finance* is of real importance, and, therefore, of the part of the Speech, which relates to that I shall take particular notice. His Royal Highness, the Regent, is represented to have said, "I have di-"rected the Estimates for the current "year to be laid before you. They "have been formed upon a full con-"sideration of all the present circum-"stances of the country, with an "anxious desire to make every re-"duction in our establishments which "*the safety of the empire* and sound "policy allow. I recommend the "state of the Public Income and "Expenditure to your early and *se-"rious attention*. I *regret* to be under "the necessity of informing you that "there has been *a deficiency in the pro-"duce of the Revenue* in the last year; "but I *trust* that it is to be ascribed

" *to temporary causes;* and I have the " *consolation* to believe that you will " find it practicable to provide for the " public service of the year, without " making additions to the burthens of " the people, and without adopting " any measure *injurious to that system* " by which the *public credit* of the "country has been hitherto sustained."

Now, my Lord, first permit me to remind you and the nation, that I said, *last year*, that this would be the case; that, for several years, I have been warning the government of what has now happened; that I specifically foretold, that the Revenue would fall off thus, and especially in a letter published in the Register in the month of October, 1815, where not only this *consequence* was clearly pointed out, but where also the *causes* were fully developed, and developed so clearly as to shew, that subjects of this nature were not, as Mr. DAWSON appears to suppose " *quite above the* " *comprehension of the* VULGAR." Indeed, my Lord, I believe that there are now very few of the people, who do not clearly understand these matters, or, at least, of that part of the people, who have been long in the practice of reading my writings.

I knew the Revenue would fall off, and I now say, that, it will not, during the year 1817, yield a clear amount of more than 35 millions. I give this as my decided and settled opinion. My Lord, I wish with all my heart I could see that ground for *trust* and *consolation*, which his Royal Highness has told the Parliament he perceives. But I really can see no such ground, unless I am to conclude that there is a fair prospect of our seeing a radical reform in the Commons' House of Parliament. Were that Reform to take place, I have, in my No. 15 of Vol. 31, which number was written on the twelfth of October last, shown, as I think very clearly, that there would be good ground for trust and consolation; but, short of the measures there pointed out, I can see no such ground. It is to me, my Lord, quite melancholy to hear Gentlemen in high station founding their hopes on the possible revival of *commerce*, by which they always mean external trade; and to hear our calamities imputed to the loss of our customers *abroad*. If this doctrine were correct, there would be no hope; for not only are the very roots of that commerce cut up, but a rival commerce has grown up to supply its place. But, my Lord, it is *internal* trade and commerce; it is the fruit of our soil; it is the production of our labour; it is the value of our capital; it is the quick movement of money from hand to hand; it is the production and re-production; it is the creation of the means of health and strength; it is the fair distribution of those means; it is the happiness of the people; it is the important effect of that confidence between man and man in pecuniary affairs; which makes one man's *word* be received as money by another man; it is that invaluable thing called *credit* between man and man. These are the objects worthy of the attention of a statesman. All these have been tremendously diminished; and without a very great change in that identical system of what is called *public credit*, and which system his Royal Highness expresses his wish to see persevered in; I frankly confess to your Lordship that I do not see the smallest ground to hope that any part of the nation's sufferings will be temporary.

My Lord, all the means of national wealth, power, and happiness, save and except good laws and liberty, must arise from the *land*. We are not, on this account, to esteem those who own, or who till the land more than we esteem the rest of the community; but, it is from the land that all must arise. It is notorious that those who till the land of this kingdom are in a ruined state. The average price of farm produce has fallen much more than one half. And, here, my Lord, give me leave to remind you of an expression of your colleague, Lord Castlereagh, towards the close of the last session of Parliament. A great deal had been said, by Mr. Western and others, about the want of *price*. The farmers only wanted *price*,

The agricultural correspondents, the agricultural societies, all over the kingdom; the movers of resolutions in the House of Commons; the authors of numerous pamphlets, in behalf of the poor unfortunate farmers; Lord Sheffield and his wool people at Lewes; the wool growing delegates and their convention; all these several individuals, and all these tribes of projectors, called aloud for *high price*; high price was what they wanted; give them but high price, and they would continue to pay taxes, to get drunk at the markets, and to swear at and ride over people, on their return home. "Well!" said Lord Castlereagh, in the month of May last, "then the distress is *temporary* only; "for I perceive that wheat is rising in "price. I see that in Scotland wheat "is already got up to eighty shillings "the quarter, and it is not likely that "it should long keep below that price "in any other part of the kingdom. "And, when wheat is got up to eighty "shillings a quarter all over the king-"dom; I shall be glad to know "where will THEN be the distress?"

His Lordship's argument was very fair against Mr. Western, Mr. Coke, and the other gentlemen of *high price*. It was absolutely a *flail* (against which his countryman, Swift, says there is no argument) upon the heads of the silly farmers and their friends; but, as against me, and those who thought with me, the ingenious Lord's argument was not worth a straw; for, I told him, as I had told the Corn-bill gentlemen a year before, that *high price*, unless it were occasioned by fresh bales of paper money, sent forth by the Old Lady in Threadneedle Street, and her more than thousand children, who are distributed all over the country; I told them, and had been telling them for years, that unless prices were kept up by *this cause*, there could be no price, be it as high as it might, which would save the farmer and the tradesman from ruin, and the journeyman and labourer from a state approaching to starvation. And, now, my Lord, pray look at the *result*. Wheat is now, not *eighty* shillings a quarter; but a *hundred and ten* shillings a quarter; and that too, your Lordship will please to observe, while all those *ports are open*, which the silly and greedy farmers were for keeping for ever closed. "Where "will *then* be the distress," said Lord Castlereagh, "if wheat gets up to "eighty shillings a quarter?" It has got up to a hundred and ten shillings a quarter, and the distress is greater than ever.

And thus it must go on, unless new bales of paper money can be got out, or unless taxation be greatly reduced. The fruit of productive labour is now taken and given to unproductive labour in such a large proportion, that production and re-production with all their wonderful effects, are daily and hourly diminishing. *This* is the cause and the only cause, of the miseries of the country, and of the far greater part of the crimes that now blacken the calenders of the sessions and the assizes. It is curious to observe that his Royal Highness has been advised to ascribe the national distress partly to the "unfavourable "state of the *season*." Why, my Lord, it is that very season which has caused that very *high price*, upon the return of which the Corn-bill conjurors most seriously relied, as the infallible means of the renovation of their affairs, and of the restoration of prosperity. So that here we find ourselves in this curiously interesting dilemma, that, while his Royal Highness is advised by his Ministers to lament the existence of a season, which has casually produced *high prices*, the whole corps of land owners and farmers, divided into battalions and platoons throughout the counties and the hundreds, are bellowing with the lungs of Stentor, and with the constancy of the pendulum of a clock, for the creation and continuation of *high prices*, as the only remedy for all our difficulties, and as the sole means of restoring the nation to ease and happiness.

For us, poor mortals, whom Mr. Dawson describes as meddling with matters *quite above our vulgar compre-*

hension; for us, it is not to attempt to extricate the parties out of this dilemma, and I will, therefore, with your Lordship's permission, proceed humbly to offer you some observations on the other parts of the speech.

His Royal Highness expresses his satisfaction, at having to inform the Parliament that the new Silver Coin will immediately find its way into circulation; and he is pleased to express his "trust that this measure "will be productive of *considerable* "*advantages* to the trade and internal "transactions of the country."

Now, my Lord, though one of the "vulgar," I have presumed to turn some portion of my attention to subjects connected with money and currency. I do, indeed, perceive great *advantages* that will *ultimately* result from the sending forth of a silver coinage, consisting of pieces having a fixed and intrinsic value; and I, for one of the vulgar, thank his Majesty's ministers for this measure. It will drive out of circulation a considerable quantity of that fictitious trash, of those despicable and dirty rags, which have long been an eye-sore to me. We shall now, to a limited extent, at any rate, hear our tills once again rattle, our pockets chink with the sound of something real; and, if men are brought to the gallows for counterfeiting here, it will be, as in good old times, for counterfeiting the King's coin. And permit me here to express a hope, that, when a gold coinage comes out, it will come out under the old-fashioned names of *guineas* and *half-guineas*, and not, as the newspapers told us it would, under the name of *sovereigns* and *demi-sovereigns*, which would have seemed to indicate a sort of longing for that doctrine of *legitimacy*, which, as your Lordship well knows, is contrary to all the principles which were entertained by our forefathers, which are recorded by all the great writers on our laws, and which were never attempted to be deviated from without producing revolution or civil war.

But, my Lord, what advantage, in any other respect than that mentioned above, are we to derive from the issue of new silver coin? For every shilling which I receive in this new silver coin, I must give a shilling, either in the debased silver of the present day, or in some of the aforesaid rags. Therefore, I can see no possibility of an increase upon the whole of the quantity of circulating medium from this cause, and, consequently, no increase of the means of paying taxes. But, I will tell you what I can see, and that is, a strong returning affection for real money, and a proportionate disaffection for its usurping representative. In short, my Lord, the new coinage will, in various ways, produce in my opinion, a diminution of the whole quantity of circulating medium; that is to say, if the coins be of their former real value; and if they be not of their former real value, the coin of the country will have undergone a permanent alteration. Still, however, this will not, in any considerable degree, lessen the effect which I contemplate, and at any rate, it appears to me quite impossible that trade and internal transactions can become more *brisk*, can furnish more employment, can increase in magnitude and celerity in consequence of this issue; and, therefore, I must ascribe to that want of comprehension, which Mr. Dawson so indulgently ascribes to the vulgar, my incapacity to understand this part of the speech of his Royal Highness. For the ten thousandth time, permit me to say it, my Lord, (for I have *proved* is above a hundred several times) that it it the diminution which has taken place in the whole quantity of the circulating medium, that has been the proximate cause, or, to speak in the language of the *vulgar*, in deference to Mr. Dawson, the nearest cause of the ruin of so many thousands of farmers and tradesmen of all descriptions; that has produced, all of a sudden, so many bankrupts, and that has sent so many honest and industrious men and their families, to those Poor Houses which now seem like so many bee-hives. Oh! no, my Lord, it is not a "*sudden transition*

from war to peace," it is not this; but it is a sudden transition from paper money, worth from *thirteen* to *fifteen* shillings the pound note, to a paper-money of which the pound note is worth *twenty* shillings; or, in other words, it is a sudden transition from taxes to the amount of *thirteen* shillings to taxes to the amount of *twenty* shillings; and this accompanied too, with all the astonishing effects of a state of things, in which a pound note *moves from hand to hand* but *twice*, where it used to move from hand to hand, probably, *eight* or *ten* times.—But, having the fear of Mr. Dawson before my eyes, and knowing that he will not include your Lordship amongst the *vulgar*, I will not presume to trespass upon your time by extending my observations upon this subject, and we hasten to the concluding, and much more important part of his Royal Highness's Speech, in the following words:

"The *distresses* consequent upon "the termination of a war of such "unusual extent and duration, have "been felt, with greater or less se- "verity, *throughout all the nations* "*of Europe;* and have been consi- "derably aggravated by the unfa- "vourable state of the season— "Deeply as I lament the pressure of "these evils upon this country, I "am sensible that they are of a "nature *not to admit of an immediate* "*remedy;* but whilst I observe with "peculiar satisfaction the *fortitude* "with which so many privations have "been borne, and the active *benevo-* "*lence which has been employed to* "*mitigate them,* I am persuaded that "the *great sources* of our national "prosperity are essentially *unim-* "*paired,* and I entertain a confident "expectation that the *native energy* "*of the country* will at no distant "period surmount all the difficul- "ties in which we are involved.— "In considering our internal situation, "you will, I doubt not, feel a *just* "*indignation* at the attempts which "have been made to *take advantage* "*of the distresses of the country,* for "the purpose of *exciting a spirit of* "*sedition and violence.*—I am too "well convinced of the loyalty and "good sense of the *great body* of "his Majesty's subjects, to believe "them capable of being perverted by "the *arts* which are employed *to se-* "*duce them;* but I am determined to "omit no precautions for preserving "the public peace, and for counter- "acting the designs of the *disaffect-* "*ed;* and I rely with the utmost con- "fidence on your cordial support and "co-operation, in upholding a system "of law and government, from which "we have derived inestimable advan- "tages, which has enabled us to con- "clude, with *unexampled glory,* a "contest whereon depended the best "interests of mankind, and which "has been hitherto felt by ourselves, "as it is acknowledged by other na- "tions, to be *the most perfect that* "*has ever fallen to the lot of any* "*people.*"

My Lord, it is out of my power to say, precisely, what is the situation of the people "throughout all the na- "tions of Europe," where the sovereigns have formed what *they* call a *Holy Alliance;* and I can easily believe, that there is distress enough in France, where the massacre of Protestants immediately succeeded the restoration of the House of Bourbon, and in Spain, where the restoration of the Inquisition immediately succeeded the restoration of the same House. I can easily believe, also, that the Bourbons and bigotry have not failed to bring misery in their train in re-occupying the beautiful provinces of Italy. But my Lord, I do not like, when *comparisons* are set on foot, to confine my view to Europe, and to those countries which are as much strangers to the laws of England, and to the principles and manners of our ancestors, as they are to the language of England. I prefer rather, if a comparison must be forced upon me, to cast my eyes, for the subject of that comparison, to that country which, being the haunt of savages and wild beasts, about a hundred years ago,

was then first visited by Englishmen, and in which country, by the legislation of a PENN, and by the writings of a PAINE, and by men acting upon their principles of legislation and of politics, a government has been raised, and a nation grown up, worthy to be referred to as a subject of comparison upon an occasion like the present. That country, too, my Lord, has been at war, and has been engaged in a war of no common magnitude and interest. A free people have there been called forth to defend, single-handed, not their exposed shores only, but their towns, their metropolis, the public buildings of which they have seen in flames; but their very houses, and not only their *fire*-sides, but their *bed*-sides, against the single-handed efforts of this mighty nation. War was not a thing *talked of* in America: it was a thing felt. During the whole of that war (and I beg your Lordship to note well the fact), though the country was actually invaded in many points at once; though one district had actually been compelled to yield obedience, as a conquest, to the arms of the enemy, and though the capital city was in flames, and the executive authority compelled to retreat from it: though this was the situation of that country, Mr. President MADISON, to his immortal honour be it recorded, never called for, never solicited, never received, any other support or means of protection to his government, than that which he derived, in times of profound peace, from the settled course of the laws, and from the ordinary proceedings of courts of justice; nor was there one single American, during the whole of that perilous conflict, punished, or imprisoned, on a charge of rebellion, sedition or disaffection.

Well, my Lord! *peace* came to America. That free country was again blessed with peace; and, as your Lordship very well remembers, nothing could possibly come more *suddenly*. It came at a time when no human being expected it. Yet, the "*sudden transition from war to peace*" produced in *that* country none of those dreadful effects, which we now witness in *our own*; and, since his Royal Highness has been advised by his ministers to introduce a comparison into his speech, it will, I humbly hope, be permitted me to observe, that, while his ROYAL HIGHNESS has to *regret* that the revenue in *England* is marked by a *deficiency*, Mr. MADISON has had to *congratulate* the people of *America*, that their revenue, even with a *large diminution* of the number of taxes, has been marked by a *surplus*, to more than one fourth of the amount of the whole of the national expenditure! Therefore, though it be generally allowed that comparisons are odious, and though I, for my part, wish by no means to make use of a comparison for the purpose of giving a tone of aggravation to our sufferings, I most humbly trust, that, seeing that the nations of Europe have been so pointedly referred to, and produced as a sort of proof that national calamity and misery are inseparable from a "*sudden transition from war to peace*," it will not require any very great effort of charity, even on the part of Mr. DAWSON, to find an excuse for me, in making this reference to the situation of the American republic.

I am as sensible, (if a *vulgar* man can be permitted to be sensible at all) as his Royal Highness says he is, that the evils which press upon this country, "are not of a nature to admit of "an *immediate* remedy;" that is to say, not of a complete remedy, and not very immediate; but I am in hopes, that, if any one will turn his Royal Highness's attention to that *Number Fifteen*, which I had the honour to mention to your Lordship above, he would perceive, that a great deal might be done *immediately*, and that a *complete* cure for all these evils might very soon be effected. If by "*active benevolence*" his Royal Highness is pleased to allude to the *Soup* establishments, I cannot say that I agree with him in viewing them with "*peculiar satisfaction*." I view them, on the contrary, with regret and with shame especially when I recollect, that

there is a code of Poor Laws, which ought to insure to every person in distress, without any exception, not only the means of preserving life, but the means of comfortable subsistence. Upon the same ground I would wish to be enabled to contradict a statement in the Courier, of the twenty-eighth of this month, expressing, that beds and blankets, from the public stores of the navy, had been placed at the disposal of your Lordship, as Secretary of State, and that you were dispensing them to the several parishes in and near London. In the first place, my Lord, I know of no *law* that places in the Secretary of State a power to give away, at his pleasure, any public stores whatever. On the contrary, I am sure that it is unlawful, and that the persons, who had legally the charge of those stores, are, by law, answerable for them to the public. This is not only, then, a new office, attached to the Secretary of State, but it is a new source of patronage and power; and, though I do not believe that your Lordship would make use of this power for any corrupt purpose, I know that you must leave this dispensation to other hands, and that I can see no security whatever against a very gross abuse of it. Besides, my Lord, what right has St. Margaret's Parish, for instance, or Chelsea Parish, to boons of this sort, any more than the parishes of Manchester, of Middleton, of Glasgow, or of any other? No, my Lord, it is not by boons of this sort; it is not by what is called "*active benevolence*," that this nation is to be relieved, or that it is to receive any thing even to mitigate its sufferings. The stores, thus given away, must be paid for out of the public taxes, and the money given in subscriptions must be deducted from the means of paying rates. The misery to the poor, and the ruin amongst the middle classes are *general*, and to general evils, general remedies must be applied, for they admit of no other.

What his Royal Highness may mean by the "*native energy of the country*," it would perhaps, be presumptuous in a *vulgar* man to affect to comprehend; but, if a vulgar man may be permitted to state his doubts upon the subject, I would take the liberty to observe, that every thing connected with trade, commerce, manufactures, agriculture, and even science, must depend, in a great measure, for its prosperity, upon political and civil institutions and regulations; and that I am not aware of any thing belonging to *our natures* capable of struggling against the pressure of that heavy load of taxes, which we have now to support. Therefore, my Lord, I place no reliance upon this "*native energy*," unless in as far as it may be exerted in legally and peaceably endeavouring to obtain that Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament, to which I think we are entitled, and to which I have looked for more than eleven years, as the only means of restoring the nation to happiness.

His Royal Highness next speaks of the internal situation of the country in these words; "I doubt not, you "will feel a *just indignation* at the at- "tempts which have been made to "take *advantage of the distresses* of "the country, for the purpose of ex- "citing a spirit of *sedition* and *vio-* "*lence*". He afterwards speaks of the *arts* employed to *seduce* the people.

Now, my Lord, this never can be meant to apply to those who have been speaking and writing in the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*; because, in the first place, the cause of parliamentary reform has had nothing at all to do with the *seasons*. That cause has been on foot for *forty years*; it has, in the hands of Major Cartwright, at least, never slept one single hour during those forty years. There were just as much zeal and industry employed upon the subject twenty-five years ago, as at this day. It was supported through the war as well as now in peace. No *advantage* whatever has been taken of the *season*; and of this your Lordship must be well assured, if you will but can-

didly look back to the proceedings of the Reformers for the last three years in particular. And what *arts* have any of us, who write and speak, made use of to *seduce* any body? Our *secrets* are kept as close as those which an old man tells to a young wife! The have been uttered from the house-top. They have been spoken at public meetings; they have been written with the writer's names. They have beenpublished at *licensed* Presses. They have been stamped and registered by public officers. These are wonderful *secrets!* Yet, these are all that the Reformers have. These are the *arts*, if Reformers use arts. At public meetings men of all parties may *speak*. Men of all parties may *write*. Those who have most *truth* on their side must finally prevail. What need, then, can there be to fear either orators or penmen; unless they have truth on their side? The Reformers have no power other than that which is given them by *truth and reason*; and, shall they not make use of *these?* We have no money to hire writers or speakers. We have no persons to keep up posting-bills which are calculated to serve our cause. We have no means of bribery or corruption, and of course, we are unable, utterly unable, to *seduce* any body.

As to *me*, though I am what Mr. DAWSON calls a "*vulgar*" man, I take great care *never* to utter a *seditious* word, or a word calculated to produce *violence*. On the contrary, I defy the Attorney General, and even the Devil himself, to produce from my writings any one essay, which is not written in the spirit of peace, and which does not tend to encourage patience and fortitude in the people. Not, indeed, peace towards the vile and wicked wretches, who have employed the press for the purpose of misrepresenting and calumniating the people, and for that of causing them to distrust and persecute and murder each other. Towards these mean wretches I have, and can have, no feeling but that of hatred, and I have spoken of them in the spirit of hatred accordingly.

But, my Lord, as a tree is known by its fruits, so are our "*arts*" known by their *effects*, which are the fruits of actions. I repeat, then, for the twentieth time, that meetings for Reform have been uniformly attended with *peace* and tranquillity. In no one instance has a reform meeting produced a single breach of the peace. Very different was the effect of the Church and King Meetings stirred up by "*The Loyal Association at the*" "*Crown and Anchor against Repub-*" "*licans and Levellers.*" Those meetings led to burnings in effigy: to the firing and pulling down of houses; to the ducking of people in horse-ponds; and to all sorts of outrages; and, it is remarkable enough, that *Downes* in the Strand, who was *printer* to that famous Society, is also the printer of the libellous Posting-Bill against Mr. HUNT, of the history of which Bill your Lordship will, probably, by this time, have heard the particulars, and very interesting particulars they will be found to be.

Therefore, my Lord, I wish His Royal Highness had been advised to express himself, in this part of his speech more in *particulars;* for I submit to your Lordship, whether it be not liable to produce a bad effect, for half a million of men, who have met peaceably to petition for Reform, to suppose themselves designated under appellations so little honourable to them either as Englishmen, or as human beings. For, my Lord, though they may, by some persons, be called "the *vulgar*," and regarded as not capable of comprehending high subjects, they have hearts to feel, and, they cannot but recollect, too, that it was men in their rank of life, yea, their fathers, brothers, sons and kindred, who fought and bled in those battles, of which the Speech eulogizes the "*glorious* result." They cannot but know and reflect on these things. They know, too, that "*vulgar*" as they are, they were not thought too vulgar to be called out into the Army of Reserve, the Militia, the Local Militia, the Levy-en-Mass, the Volun-

teers, in defence of the country; and, if your Lordship say, as I say, that it was *their duty* to come forth in these capacities, I hope, and, indeed, I am sure, you will be too just to say, that they have no right to meet and to petition for whatever they may deem the birth-right of Englishmen. There may be, as there have been, men to call us the "*Swinish Multitude*," and to say, that we have "no business "with the Laws *but to obey them*;" but your Lordship is not one of those men; and, at a moment when a cordial union of us, heart and hand, is wanted to save even the remnants of our prosperity, I do feel confident, that your Lordship will not yield to the suggestions of those men, be they who they may, who think contemptuously of the people.

The people, my Lord, are not so *stupid* as some persons imagine them to be. I find no people *really ignorant*, but those who despise, or affect to despise, the mass of the people. The people read, they talk, they think, and misery sharpens their understandings. They know well, that, "*vul-*"*gar*" as they are, they pay their "full share of *taxes*. They are not told this for their *information;* for they know it well. Yet are they docile and good humoured. They discover no impatience, much less "an *ignorant* "*impatience*." They are brave, loyal, and industrious, and all they want to make them prosperous, happy and contented, is, in my opinion, that voice in choosing members of parliament, to which I think, and to which most of them think, they are entitled.

Such being the real state of the case, my Lord, I was grieved to read the close of His Royal Highness's Speech, and I deeply lamented, that he was not advised to hold a language less expressive of his displeasure.—Every one wishes the peace to be preserved, except, indeed, the writers in the corrupt newspapers, who are seeking to foment disputes and to produce, it appears to me, civil carnage. It appears, indeed, next to impossible, that they can have any *other* object in view. For, they no where see any riots, any disturbances, any violences, any breaches of the peace, where there are Meetings for Reform; and, which is very curious, since these meetings have taken place, and have excited hope in the bosoms of the people, even the *Luddites* have ceased their depredations. And, when this is as "notorious as the SUN at noon-"day," is it not audacious and wicked to the last degree in these corrupt writers, to endeavour to attribute to the Reformers a desire to disturb the public peace, and to carry their point by force of arms? The people, my Lord, want *bread*. They are, in Lancashire and several other Counties, nearly upon the point of *starving!* This is no exaggeration. I am able, at the bar of the Lords, if you please, to prove what I say, in the most rigorous sense of the words. Good God! What a state is this for Englishmen to be brought to! Say, that the evil cannot, all at once, be remedied. But, my Lord, it can be softened by keeping hope alive in the suffering bosoms of these our unhappy countrymen; for "*vulgar*" as they may be, they are our *countrymen*, and they have blood in their veins, and hearts in their bosoms. They have the feelings of parents and of children, and have as much right to see to preserve life and enjoy happiness as Daniel Stewart and John Walter, or any body else. In such a case one ounce of *conciliation*, is worth a ton of *menace;* and yet, it is at this moment, at this dismal moment, when there are, probably millions, who open their eyes in the morning without knowing where to look for a breakfast, that the writers in the COURIER and the TIMES are calling for the enactment of laws of the most rigorous and cruel description! These men, who were incessant in their cries for the blood of the brave Marshal NEY, really seem to thirst for the blood of the people of England. They seek to make riots and plots, and to set all the nation in a flame. If they should succeed, woeful indeed will be the

consequences. If once they blow the embers into a blaze, the land will be covered with desolation and mourning. Only think, my Lord, of the *despair* of millions of men, to whom death is nearly as welcome as the morning light! What deeds one mind is capable of devising, when it is at war with the world, some poet has described; what, then, must be the consequences of thousands and hundreds of thousands of minds, all at one time in this horrible state!

It was from considerations like these that I was led to hope for something very *conciliatory* in the Speech of his Royal Highness, and that I still cling to the hope, that the Parliament will listen with patience to the prayers of the people, and not reject them, at any rate, without giving to the Bill, which I *know* will be moved for, all that attention and discussion, which the subject so loudly and so reasonably bespeaks. As to the *Amendments* to the Address, which are reported to have been moved by Mr. PONSONBY, they appear to me to have been of very little importance. The mass of the people feel no interest in them. They go merely to state what all the world knows; namely, that it is impossible to meet the expenditure on its present scale. They might have gone much further in this way. They might have argued and shown, that the Revenue would not, in future, meet the *Debt* without a cessation of that thing, humourously called "the *Sinking Fund*." But, we want no ghost to tell us this. We see, indeed, that it is now acknowledged, that the *system* can no longer go on *entire*; but this the Prince has pretty plainly, and very wisely, told us in his Speech; and if the bold language of Mr. VANSITTART, at the opening of the last Session, when he said, that an Englishman must be *base* who would not prefer the *then* situation of England to the situation of England in 1792; if this speech could be forgotten, we might feel compassion for that gentleman at this moment.

But, my Lord, I cannot conclude the history of Tuesday, without noticing an expression or two, which the newspapers have ascribed to Mr. DAWSON, relative to the debt and the taxes, which are as follow: "It should "be recollected, that the government "and the people had great and im- "perious duties to perform; and it "became the people to consider, that, "in *encouraging* and in *exciting* the "government to prosecute the late ar- "duous contest, and also in *partici- "pating the glories* which marked the "progress and result of that contest, "they were *bound patiently to bear "the burthens, and honestly to dis- "charge the debts*, which, through that "contest were inevitably contracted." Now, my Lord, though I do not like to accuse any gentleman, and particularly a member of parliament, of theft, nor do I know, indeed, but it has been the newspaper editors, who have, upon this occasion, as well as upon many others, committed spoliations upon me, still I must, and I do, in the name of literary honesty, (if ever such a thing existed) and in the face of this whole nation, most solemnly own, and most firmly grasp hold of, this passage as my property, and I hereby detain it as such. Why! my Lord, I have put these words in black print, and, as far as I know, marked them by italics, at least one hundred times; and upon what ground they have been appropriated by another, with so little ceremony, I am at a loss to discover; unless it be that I, being one of the "*vulgar*," am liable to be plundered with impunity, having, at the best, no other means of redress than that of suing *in formâ pauperis*. However, as it is a rule, amongst us of the vulgar, that a man may take his own wherever he finds it, I hereby lay hold on this passage, which I have found in the Morning Chronicle. This passage I have repeated, till I have been ashamed of the repetition. I had left it off: flung it out, as a drayman does an exhausted quid of tobacco; and the speech writer of the Morning Chronicle has picked it up, and put it in the mouth of Mr. Dawson.

Seriously, my Lord, if you have done

me the honour to read what I write, how often did I say, about the time when Napoleon was sent to Elba, that now the *Meeters* at the Mansion House, the *Addressers* in the Counties and from the Quarter Sessions, the *Addressers* in the great towns and manufacturing districts, the *Addressing* Yeomanry, the whole body of the *Clergy;* in short, all those who urged the government to go to war, to persevere in the war, to renew the war, and to re-renew the war, and to hire foreign troops, in order to assist in dethroning Napoleon a second time, and in restoring the Bourbons again and again, and to keep up an army in France, how often have I said, that all these persons ought to bear the burthen of taxes patiently, and to pay the interest of the debt honestly; how often have I said, that having pledged their *lives* and *fortunes* for the prosecution of so glorious a war, and having roasted oxen and sheep, and given fêtes to old Blucher, to celebrate the accomplishment of their object, they must be the most niggardly and sneaking vagabonds that ever existed, to grudge the last farthing of those *fortunes*, the whole of which they had pledged, seeing that the government, so far from asking for their *lives*, did not seem to desire to hurt a single hair of their heads? But, it appears pretty clear, that the "*vulgar*" could be under no such pledge, seeing that they were incapable of comprehending such topics. Therefore, upon this point, there will, I imagine, be no dispute at all. The *vulgar* being left out of the question, I have not the smallest objection to say that the *life* and *fortune* men ought to bear their burthens patiently, and to pay their debts to the utmost farthing of their means.

In conclusion, my Lord, as much has, in different places, and by different persons, been said about "the *Demagogues*," who have harangued at the Parliamentary Reform Meetings, I beg leave to observe, that a "*demagogue*" means, in its true sense, a man, who, under the false pretence of intending to assist, or serve, the people, gets into possession of public money, or other public plunder. In short, a demagogue is, or would be, a public robber; a wretch, gorged, or wishing to be gorged, some how or other, with the public wealth; a political leech, who is sucking, or has sucked, or is trying to suck, the blood of the Commonwealth; a base wretch, who, rather than not fatten upon the public spoil, would set the whole nation together by the ears and see them cut each other's throats. Such a miscreant will talk so loudly and with such apparent sincerity about the *good of the people* and about his *attachment to the Royal Family*, and, he will express so much horror at what he calls disloyal language, that many good men are deceived by his harangues. But, the greedy cormorant, whether he talk of the people or the king, whether he profess friendship to the first or the last, he has public plunder in view; and, therefore, nothing puts him so much in a rage as those efforts which tend to cut off, or lessen, his means of obtaining and securing that plunder, by exposing his frauds and his atrocities. A *demagogue;* that is to say, a true demagogue, when he finds himself opposed by facts or arguments, which he can neither controvert nor set up any plausible answer to, is sure to "*fall foul*," as the sailors call it, of his adversaries; that is to say, to load them with all sorts of *abuse;* to impute motives to them which they never entertained, and which he *knows* that they never entertained; to calumniate them, and to expose them, if possible, to utter ruin, and even to personal destruction. But, my Lord, the sure and certain mark, by which you shall know a true demagogue, is this; though he is excessively malignant and loud in his abuse; though he rages and foams like a storm, while he is assailing his adversaries, he is as cowardly as he is unjust and cruel, and always takes special care to make his attacks *behind the backs* of those adversaries!—Oh! how big and bold he looks then! How he swaggers! How pompously

he talks! But, put him in the face of those adversaries, let him meet them foot-to-foot, and he sinks down his head, and hides his face as if it were pelted at with mud or rotten eggs.

Now, my Lord, these are the signs by which you shall know a true demagogue, with this addition, that, if he be *empty*, and wants filling, he is always abusing the King's ministers and bawling for *a change of them*, in order, as he pretends, to bring more wisdom and talent to the service of the Country, but as he really means, in order to get something for himself. If at any of the Public Meetings for Reform, your Lordship has perceived any persons of *this description*, then those meetings have been attended by *Demagogues*. But, my Lord, not one such man have I observed at any of those meetings. In all the Speeches and Resolutions, and Petitions that I have read, *truth*, *sincerity*, and *fairness* have been the main characteristics; free and open discussion has every where been invited; a strictly peaceable and orderly conduct has been observed; and, in no one instance have any of the speakers attempted to interfere with the just prerogatives of the Crown *by calling for a change of the Ministry*. All the meetings have carefully avoided this sort of indecency, in spite of the attempts of some of that viperous faction, called *Whigs*, who have still, notwithstanding the universal detestation in which they are held, been endeavouring to turn the popular tide to the account of their own selfishness.

Seeing that this is a true account of the proceedings of the Reformers, I cannot help regretting that an amendment, in the following words, which, as appears from the newspapers, was moved on Wednesday night, by the gallant LORD COCHRANE, should have found NO ONE even to SECOND it!

"That this House has taken a view "of the public proceedings, throughout the country, by those persons, "who have met to petition for a Reform of this House, and that, in "justice to those persons as well as "to the people at large, and for the "purpose of convincing the people "that this House wishes to entertain "and encourage no misrepresentation "of their honest intentions, this House "with great humility, beg leave to "assure his Royal Highness, that they "have not been able to discover one "single instance, in which meetings to "petition for Parliamentary Reform "have been accompanied with any "attempt to disturb the public tranquillity; and this House further "beg leave to assure his Royal Highness, that, in order to prevent the "necessity of those rigorous measures, "which are contemplated in the latter part of the Speech of his Royal "Highness, this House will take into "their early consideration the propriety of abolishing sinecures and "unmerited pensions and grants, the "reduction of the civil list, and of all "salaries which are now disproportionate to the services, and especially, that they will take into their "consideration the Reform of this "House, agreeably to the laws and "constitution of the land, this House "being decidedly of opinion that justice and humanity, as well as policy, "call, at this time of universal distress, for measures of conciliation, "and not of rigour, towards a people who have made so many and "such great sacrifices, and who are "now suffering, in consequence of "those sacrifices, all the calamities "with which a nation can be afflicted."

Not one word, my Lord, is there here, which is not TRUE as to the conduct of the Reformers. And yet, no one to *second* the motion! Therefore the motion was *not put!* Not *one* member to second the gallant and faithful Lord Cochrane! Well, my Lord, we will not *despair;* nor will we even be discouraged; nor shall any of the arts of miscreant demagogues seduce us from coolly, steadily, legally and loyally pursuing our object. Like our true-hearted leader, Major Cartwright, we will persevere, through good report, and evil report, bearing all things, suffering all things;

and we will not doubt, that, unless we can be shown, by the powers of *reason*, to be in error, our cause will finally triumph.

In the hope, that I shall live to see your Lordship a friend of this cause, and in a hearty detestation of those who take advantage of the distresses of the nation to make attacks upon the Ministry for the purpose of getting their places and emoluments, I remain, with the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient,
And most humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

P. S. –Pray, my Lord, read the following, which I have just received from Liverpool:—

Liverpool, 28th January, 1817.

SIR,—We have this day had our Special Vestry, for the purpose of increasing the Poor Rates, and, as you will perceive by the underwritten, something of a novel nature was resolved upon. *We have resolved to memorialize the Treasury, praying for a suspension of the Collection of Assessed Taxes.*

The Vestry was held in St. NICHOLAS's Church.

THE RESOLUTIONS.—"That the increased "and increasing numbers and necessities of "the poor of this parish, form a subject of "the most serious alarm to the inhabitants "thereof. That the cause of this frightful "increase is to be found only in the unmi- "tigated pressure of taxation, a taxation "which, in its insatiable cravings, swallows "up the means of honourable employment "for the industrious, strips the poor of their "scanty means of existence, and threatens "those who have hitherto been able to pre- "serve their stations in the middle ranks of "society, with immediate ruin and beggary. "That to ease the country of this destructive "pressure is the first and only reasonable "course to be pursued, if we would save it "from increased misery, confusion, and de- "solation. That though this vestry cannot "deny the imperious necessities, and just "claims of the poor of the parish, to an ad- "ditional rate for their maintenance, it can- "not overlook the inability which many of "the householders labour under to pay the "amount of the assessments heretofore de- "manded. That in this dilemma the only "mode of proceeding which presents itself "to this Vestry, for arresting the further "progress of pauperism, and of enabling "many who are now tottering on its brink, "to preserve their station in society, (the "only course which offers itself to our "adoption) appears to be an earnest appeal "to the Government to forbear for a sea- "son, at least, the collection of some part "of the taxes.—That the only taxes which "we can flatter ourselves with a hope that "Government will be prevailed upon to re- "linquish, and those which, in proportion "to their amount, seem best calculated to "afford the relief proposed, appear to this "Vestry to be the assessments on Dwelling "Houses.—That in furtherance of this ob- "ject, a Petition or Memorial, from this "Vestry, be transmitted to the Lords of his "Majesty's Treasury, praying them to give "orders for a discontinuance of all forcible "collection of the assessments on dwelling "houses, until the inhabitants of this parish "are better able to sustain their pressure. "—That the Petition now read be adopted, "and that it be signed by the Clerk of the "Vestry on behalf of the Meeting."

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

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COBBETT's WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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NOTICE.

All the *back numbers* of the Cheap Register are now *re-printed in the pamphlet form*—It has at the request of many persons, been determined to publish *Paper against Gold* in *Numbers*, instead of a whole book, and to collect the Numbers into *a book at last*.—This will, therefore, be done; and, as there will now be *an addition* to it, the thing shall be so contrived, that those who have already purchased the work in two volumes, may purchase the addition separate to be added to those Volumes.—The Numbers will be *two-pence each*, and the first will be published on Saturday, the 22nd of this month.—There will be about 17 Numbers; so that the whole work will not exceed in price 2*s.* 10*d.* or thereabouts.

A LETTER

TO THE

LIFE-AND-FORTUNE MEN.

Meeting on Portsdown.—Misery and not Reform the cause of Riots.—Funding System the cause of Misery.—Dreadful state of Islington, Coventry, &c.—Poor Dugood's Petition.—Mr. Hunt's Petition.—Mr. Hunt's Letter to Lord Sidmouth.

London, February, 5th, 1817.

LIFE-AND-FORTUNE MEN,

Being rather in haste to set off to a Meeting on Portsdown Hill, which is to be held on Monday next, you will have, I hope, the goodness to excuse me, if I am not quite so ceremonious as your correspondents generally are.

I have read, and the people have read, not with indignation, for no effort of your venom is now capable of exciting a feeling of so high an order; but we have read, with scorn and contempt, the attack, on the Parliamentary Reformers, contained in your *Declaration*, issued by a Meeting of you at the London Tavern on the 31st of last month, which meeting is stated to have consisted of *Bankers, Merchants, Traders* and others, and, amongst the names of the persons signing which Declaration are several of those who have the management of the affairs of the Bank of England. I shall presently speak more particularly of the terms and assertions of that Declaration; but, first, it is impossible to refrain from remarking, that most of you were amongst the *Addressers* of 1793, who then urged the government on to that war, of the expences and the debts of which this nation is now tasting the bitter, the poisonous, the destructive fruit. You are, in fact, *the same body of men*, the chasms made by time having been filled up as they occurred. Curious this fact is to contemplate! What! at the end of twenty-five years of war and glory against Republicans and Levellers, do you find it necessary to come forth again! *Again*, after more than a thousand millions have been expended in taxes and nearly another thousand millions of Debt have been contracted for the purpose of preserving what you call the Constitution! *Again*, after the Bourbons and the Inquisition and the Pope and the Jesuits have been restored, after all the Republics of Europe have been destroyed, and after a holy alliance has been solemnly concluded between all the principal sovereigns! *Again*, after such volumes of congratulation on the triumph of social order, after all the ox-roasting and temple-building in commemoration of that glorious triumph, and after we have been told, that "the *play being over* we may *now*

"*sit down to supper!*" After all this, do we behold you sallying forth *again* with your imputations against Parliamentary Reformers, and with your promises and vows to assist in keeping them down? But, before I proceed to comment on your Declaration, let me first insert it, that the world may hear you as well as me.

The *place* of your meeting is not unworthy of notice. "The *London* "*Tavern.*" Why in a *house?* why in a hired room, if you meant that your Declaration should carry any weight with it as expressing any thing like a *public sentiment?* It was at this same London Tavern, that the famous position of "*a sudden transition from war* "*to peace*" was blown to air by LORD COCHRANE, and which position is now scouted by the Members of both Houses of Parliament without the smallest degree of ceremony or reserve. The London Tavern was no place to hold a meeting of the *People* of London, and the place of meeting shows that it was judicious in you not to imitate the language of the Manchester *Declarers*, who insist, that *they* speak the voice of "*the great body*, "or *great majority*, of his Majesty's "subjects."

Your Declaration, after the introductory verbiage, is in the following words:—"We, the undersigned Mer-"chants, Bankers, Traders, and In-"habitants of London, deem it to be "incumbent on us to come forward "with a Declaration of our senti-"ments on the present crisis of public "affairs.—We are far from being "insensible to the evils which at pre-"sent affect every class of the com-"munity, more especially the lower "orders; we are anxiously desirous "that every practicable means may "be used for alleviating their dis-"tresses; and we entertain a sanguine "hope, that the embarrassments with "which we have to struggle, will, by "the exercise of a wise and enlighten-"ed policy, be overcome; and that "the agriculture, manufactures, and "commerce of the country, will at "no distant period revive and flourish. "We are satisfied at the same time, "that nothing can tend more to re-"tard the accomplishment of our "wishes and hopes, than the endea-"vours which have recently been ex-"erted with too much success, *by* "*designing and evil-minded men*, to "persuade the people that a remedy "is to be found in measures which "*under specious pretences*, would "effect the overthrow of the Consti-"tution. To these endeavours *may* "*be traced the criminal excesses which* "*have lately disgraced the Metropolis* "*and other parts of the Empire;* and "the still more desperate and atro-"cious outrage which has recently "been committed *against the sacred* "*person of the Prince Regent*, on "his return from opening Parliament, "in the exercise of the functions of "our revered Monarch. We cannot "adequately express our abhorrence "of these enormities, which, *if not* "*repressed*, must lead to scenes of "anarchy and bloodshed, too appal-"ling to contemplate; and we feel "it to be a solemn and imperious "duty we owe to our country, to "*pledge ourselves individually and* "*collectively*, to support the just "exercise of the *authority of Govern-*"*ment*, to maintain the Constitution "*as by law established*, and to resist "every attempt, whether of craft or "violence, that may be directed "against our civil liberty and our so-"cial peace."

Now, you will hardly be so hypocritical and so cowardly as to pretend, that you do not mean the Parliamentary Reformers, when you speak of "*designing and evil-minded men*," and that you wish to cause it to be believed (as if any body would, or could believe you!) that the "*late riots in* "*London, and other parts of the Em-*"*pire*, and even the *attack upon the* "*Regent* are to be *traced to* the en-"deavours" of the Reformers. Great as may be the hypocrisy of which you are masters, you will hardly attempt to deny, that this is the meaning of your words. And, this being their meaning, was there ever a more audacious falsehood published to the world?

First, as to the "*criminal excesses*,"

committed in other parts of the "*Em-*" *pire,*" who told you, that this was "*an Empire?*" Where did you pick up that new-fangled slang? To what half-foreign jargon-monger have you been to school? This is a kingdom, that is to say, a commonwealth, a political mixed government, having a king for its chief. We acknowledge no *imperial* sway, and, in spite of your jargon, you may be sure, that we never shall; for before we do that, we must burn all our laws and all our law books, and forswear all the notions of our forefathers, which we shall not do, in order to follow the example of a set of dealers in paper-money, whose traffic, as we shall by-and-by see, has been one of the great causes of our ruin.

But, not to criticise further, where censure and condemnation are so loudly called for, what proof have you, that "*criminal excesses*" out of London can be *traced to the Reformers?* Where have these excesses been committed? In the *Isle of E'y;* in *Suffolk;* in *Wales;* at *Dundee.* That is all, I believe; and, you *know well,* that, in neither of those places has there been any meeting for Reform. In all those places some misguided and suffering people have made attacks upon threshing machines, or have assembled to demand a rise of wages, or have seized on food in bakers' and other shops; but, in no one of those cases has there been, amongst the people so assembling, any *talk* even about Reform. Some of the unhappy creatures have *suffered death* for their "*criminal excesses;*" their confessions or pretended confessions, have been published to the world; and, in those confessions not one word is to be found about the influence of Reformers on their minds.

Then as to the riot in London, which was really very criminal, you also *well know,* that Reform and Reformers had nothing to do with the matter. The WATSONS, though persons, until that day, of excellent character, appear to have adopted the *Spencean principles,* which, without my troubling myself about them here, are well known as having nothing to do with Parliamentary Reform, whatever any base and malignant and profligately corrupt man may say to the contrary. Nay, so clear is this fact, that Mr. HUNT, who came up the first time to Spa-fields upon the invitation of the Spenceans, without knowing any thing of their projects, *threw aside* the Memorial that *they* had prepared, and proposed a petition for Reform and relief, which was laid before the Prince by Lord Sidmouth, and which was soon after followed by a donation, or grant, of five thousand pounds, by the Prince, and by that large Soup-subscription in the city, which appears never to have been so much as thought of before. It was *then,* and *not till then,* that a Meeting took place at the Mansion-House; that so piteous a picture of the state of the Poor of Spital-fields was exhibited to the public; *then* Mr. Buxton was extremely eloquent, but, *until then,* he was silent upon the subject. So that, though I call not in question the motives of any of the individuals engaged in promoting that subscription, but, on the contrary, do most sincerely commend those motives, I say, and I shall always say, that the subscription and all the relief it has afforded, are to be ascribed to Mr. HUNT more than to any other person. The example of the Prince Regent had, doubtless, a great effect on the subscribers, and I am willing to give it its full due; but, it was Mr. HUNT who was the cause of the deep distresses of the people being MADE KNOWN to his Royal Highness, who, had it not been for the Petition from Spa-fields, would, probably, never have heard of them.

Well, but there have been persons seized, and papers seized upon those who were accused of a *plot* upon that occasion. And, even letters from Mr. HUNT have been seized. They have, however, never been *published* nor ever brought forward upon any trial. The fact is, they contained no proof of any wish to produce unlawful acts, but, I dare say, precisely the contrary. The rioters have been *tried;*

all the evidence has been produced against them; but not one word about *Parliamentary Reform.* There have, however, been words enough about *distress* and *misery*, and, some of these words you shall now have from the lips of the poor unfortunate CASHMAN, when he was asked "*why* sentence of *death* should not "be passed upon him?"—These are those memorable words: "MY "LORD,—I hope you will excuse a "poor friendless sailor for occupying "your time. Had I died fighting the "battles of my country I should have "gloried in it: but I confess that it "grieves me to think of suffering like "a robber, when I can call God to "witness that *I have passed days to-*"*gether without even a morsel of* "*bread rather than violate the laws.* "I have served my King for many "years, and often fought for my "country. I have received *nine* "*wounds in the service*, and never "before have been charged with any "offence. I have been at sea *all my* "*life*, and my *Father was killed on* "*board the Diana frigate.* I came "to London, my Lord, *to endeavour* "*to recover my pay and prize-money*, "but being *unsuccessful*, I was re-"duced to the greatest distress, and "being poor and pennyless, I have "not been able to bring forward wit-"nesses to prove my innocence, nor "even to acquaint my brave officers, "or I am sure they would all have "come forward in my behalf. The "gentlemen who have sworn against "me must have mistook me for some "other person (there being *many* "*sailors in the mob*); but I freely "forgive them, and I hope God will "also forgive them, for I solemnly "declare that I committed no act of "violence whatever."

I will not say, that these words will make any impression on *your* hearts; but, do you find here; do you find in the cause which led this poor and pennyless man to commit "*criminal* "*excesses*" any proof, or the semblance of proof, that the riot was produced by the doctrines or actions of Reformers? And yet this was the only man, to whom a capital offence could be traced. Was it the Parliamentary Reformers, who caused this poor and friendless creature to "pass whole "days without even a morsel of "bread?" Was it the Reformers, who sent him to sea "all his life?" Was it the Reformers from whom he had "endeavoured to recover his *pay and* "*prize-money without success?*" Then how do you "*trace*" his rioting and his "criminal excesses" to those Reformers, whom you most basely designate as *designing* and "*evil-mind-*"*ed men*" and to whom you assert, that you *can trace* the "criminal "excesses which lately disgraced the "Metropolis?"

The truth is, that, at the time of the riot, there were hundreds of starving sailors in the Metropolis, and, I believe, I might say, thousands. A person, whom I will not name, having, at that time, frequent occasion to go over Westminster Bridge, and in company with whom I myself was, used to give a shilling or two to each groupe of these miserable men, who were stationed in the recesses of that Bridge; and, never, while I have memory, shall I forget the emotions created in them by these trifling largesses. Upon one occasion a young man of about 28 years of age, who said he had been in the battle of Trafalgar, who had no shirt, shoe, stocking or hat, who would have been handsome if his long beard had been taken off, and if decently dressed, upon having an eighteen-penny-piece put into his hand, looked stedfastly in the face of the donor, and then burst into a flood of tears, being utterly unable to speak.

I do not address a narrative like this to *you*; but the public at large well know that many, many hundreds of sailors were, at the time alluded to, in this miserable, this desperate situation; and, it is also notorious, that the rioters consisted principally of this unhappy class of men. How, then, do you *trace* this riot to the Reformers, or to any persons whom you designate as "*designing and evil-minded* "*men?*" Was it the Reformers who

placed the sailors in this situation? Was it the Reformers, then, who produced the riot? No; and you well know the fact, that the *rioters* consisted of a parcel of these starving sailors and of persons who had been at the hanging of four men, joined by a party of Spenceans, who *disagreed* with the Reformers, and who had marched from Spa-fields before Mr. HUNT came *into London*, for he, as he can prove, actually *met* the rioters in Cheapside as he was coming from Wanstead, and as they were proceeding towards the Mansion-House. They called upon him to go with them, telling him that all the people were gone from Spa-fields. "No;" said Mr. Hunt, "I shall go to the "meeting, I have nothing to do with "rioters." And what did he do at Spa-fields? Why, the very first resolution that he proposed, was, that *that man was the greatest enemy of Reform who should be guilty of violence of any sort.*

Now, then, again I ask you, how do you trace that riot to the Reformers? And, upon what ground do you utter your insinuations of disloyalty and treason against them? But still more audacious is your assertion, that you can *trace* the attack on the Regent to the Reformers. Has any Reformer been apprehended for that offence? Can you trace the man, who has been *taken up* (for that is all) to any connection with any man distinguished amongst the Reformers? There was a large number of Reformers in London on that day. Mr. Hunt, *Hunt the Great*, (for I foretold that the stupid malice of the corrupt would make him a "*great man*") was in London on that day; nay, he was even in Westminster on that day; but how was he, and how were the Reformers employed? Not in any of the scenes in the Park; not in attacking or insulting the Regent; but in carrying their Petitions to Lord Cochrane's house in Palace-Yard, and in seeing the first of those Petitions carried into the House of Commons. How, then, I ask for the tenth time, do you support your calumnious assertions and imputations against the Reformers?

Is it the *writings* of Reformers that you are pleased to have in view? If so, I will not be guilty of the false modesty of supposing, that my little Work has not the honour to come in for a large portion of your enmity. But, point me out, then, if you can, even with the assistance of the Devil, with a "learned friend" for prompter, one single essay or article of mine, which is calculated to incite the people to acts of violence of any sort. On the contrary, they have all a tendency, a direct, clear and powerful tendency, to *prevent* acts of outrage on farmers, tradesmen, and every other class of persons of property; and this is so notorious, that it has been frequently the practice of people of property in large manufacturing towns to purchase these essays, and to give them away amongst their workmen.

And as to the Prince Regent, or any part of the Royal Family, what a shame it is to insinuate that I have ever endeavoured to excite the hatred of the people against them! On the contrary, I have avoided, as much as possible, every thing having such a tendency. If, indeed, the Whig Faction and the Morning Chronicle had been accused of this, there might have been a good deal to countenance the charge; for out of every ten numbers of that paper, for years past, eight at least, have contained little or much aimed personally at the Prince Regent, or some one or more of his Family. All his expences; his studs of horses; the decorations of his apartments; the changes in the furniture of his houses; the alterations in his buildings; the projects about new streets; the carrying of kitchen utensils from Carlton House to Brighton: in short, every little thing that could, by means however dirty, be found out, relative to his Royal Highness, or any of his attendants, or associates, or friends, has been put forward by this paper and swelled out to as great a bulk as possible. And, after all this, the proprietor of this scurrilous and factio-

paper, bursts out into extraordinary effusions of loyalty; talks in big words about the "sacred person of the Re-"gent;" and, at the same time, joins in your insinuations! If this be not baseness, I should be glad to know what the word baseness really means. But, at any rate, if any of you can find in my little work, one single essay the fair construction of which can be called an incitement to hate or contemn the Prince Regent, or the Royal Office and Authority, I will be content, not only to be called "*a design-*"*ing and evil-minded man,*" but I will confess myself to be a traitor, and consent to suffer all the pains and penalties of the law accordingly,

Where, then, are the grounds upon which you so impudently prefer these charges against us? Is not the Country already in a state of distraction great enough, without your endeavours to excite such powerful feelings of resentment and eternal ill-will amongst such numerous classes of the people?

But, though you cannot trace any of the lamentable occurrences, of which you speak, to the writings, the speeches, or the actions of the Reformers; and though you *will not* attempt to trace them to their true cause; I shall not, my good Life-and-Fortune-Men, be so shy upon the subject; and therefore, I shall here treat you with my DECLARATION, which I beg you to receive, as an appropriate answer to your own.

DECLARATION.

Whereas, certain Bankers, Stock-Jobbers, and others, of the City of London, have recently met, at a Tavern, in the said City; and whereas, being so met, they then and there issued a certain Declaration, in which they falsely and calumniously ascribed the divers riots which have taken place in the several parts of the kingdom to the proceedings of the Parliamentary Reformers, whom they impudently call "designing and evil-minded "men;" and, whereas, it is expedient that the said Riots should be traced to their true causes, and as I think myself able to do this with great simplicity, I, William Cobbett, with a view of doing this, do hereby declare,

FIRST, that it is a notorious truth, that the Riots in the County of Suffolk, in the Isle of Ely, in the principality of Wales, at Dundee in Scotland, and in the City of London, have all been carried on, and perpetrated, by persons in great want and misery; that the manifest object, in all these cases, (and no riots have taken place any where else) has been to obtain food by the means of violent proceedings; for, though threshing machines were destroyed in Suffolk; though the people in the Isle of Ely demanded a rise of wages; though the people in Wales demanded employment; though the people of Dundee complained of the high price of oat-meal; though the sailors in London broke open gunsmiths' shops, in a very unlawful and unjustifiable manner; and though the conduct of all the parties, in all these cases, cannot by any means be defended; still, the fact notoriously is, that all these riots and criminal excesses have had for their immediate cause a greater or less proportion of that terrible and unexampled distress, which now pervades every part of the kingdom, and which, while it astounds the minds of the wise, and melts the hearts of the humane, can never be mitigated, but must be augmented, by every attempt, whether arising from folly or knavery, to disguise its real and all-powerful cause.

SECOND, That the more immediate causes of this distress and this misery, are, a want of employment, and an incapacity to afford a sufficiency of relief to the unemployed Part of the Labouring People, who, necessarily, have no capital or stock whereon to live.

THIRD, That these evils have arisen, not from "a sudden transition from war to peace," but, from a deep-rooted cause of calamity, namely, a system of fictitious currency, which, by its *sudden transitions* from high to low, and then again from low to

high, has ruined, in many instances, has broken down in more instances, and has crippled in all instances, the land-owner, the farmer, the master tradesman, the ship-owner, the master-manufacturer, and all those engaged in the employment, or protection, of productive labour.

FOURTH, That these *sudden transitions* have arisen from the vast quantity of Paper-Money issued by the Bank of England some years ago, and by her nurselings, the Country Banks; and that that immense issue of Paper-Money, which at once brought down prices, and raised up taxes and salaries, was owing to the stoppage of Cash Payments at the Bank of England, in the year 1797; and which stoppage arose, as the Records of Parliament inform us, out of an APPLICATION MADE BY THE THEN GOVERNOR AND DIRECTORS OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND TO THE MINISTER OF THAT DAY.

FIFTH, That, amongst the Governor and Directors of the Bank of England of that day, *I find the names of several of the signers of the above-mentioned Declaration, at the London Tavern*; and that, therefore, I am clearly of opinion that I have logically "*traced*" the late "*criminal excesses*" to those worthy gentlemen themselves.

This is declaration for declaration, and I am not at all afraid to submit them, side by side, to the common sense of mankind. But, my worthy *Declarers*, I am not going to stop here. It is now very nearly *fourteen* years since I stood alone, and for thirteen years I stood alone, in declaring it to be my fixed opinion that the total ruin of the country, that the upsetting of all property, that the miseries of slavery, or the miseries of confusion, must ultimately ensue, at no very distant period, if a stop were not put to the increase of the debt and the paper-money. This period is not yet arrived indeed; but it will require very great wisdom, and very resolute measures with regard to the debt and the expenditure in general, to prevent its arriving.

I now hear gentlemen and noblemen enough in the Two Houses of Parliament ready enough to adopt and to utter many of my sentiments on this subject, which sentiments were, for many, many years, held in derision by some, and considered as criminal by others. I have heard My Lord Grey now say, that *the taxes* which were *imposed* in *one* currency, are now *collected* in *another currency*; and his Lordship might have added, and, perhaps did add, though it is not in the report of his speech, that the same remark extended to rents, tythes by composition, lease-holds, ground-rents, annuities, bonds, mortgages, marriage-settlements, and all the other transactions between man and man; and, surely, if the taxes were *imposed* in *one* currency, and are now *collected* in *another* currency, all that large part of the *debt* which has been borrowed since the year 1797 was *lent* in *one* currency, and ought not to be *paid* in *another* currency.

And now, Gentlemen of the Life-and-Fortune Class, when you have had time well to digest this little pill, when you have taken time to ruminate upon the effect of this answer to your Declaration, and to consider whether it might not as well have been left alone, let me beseech your attention, if your wits are not too much bewildered, while I recur a little to those opinions and predictions of mine which were put in print nearly fourteen years ago.

At that time a new war had just been begun against France; the minister, Mr. Addington, had brought forward his scheme of finance. Upon that occasion, and under the date of the eleventh of June, 1803, I addressed a letter to Mr. Addington, the objects of which were, first, to show that the *Sinking Fund was a delusion*; next to congratulate Mr. Addington upon the taxes which he had just then laid upon the funds; and, third, to show that what was called a National

Bankruptcy would be no evil, but a very great good; and the words were as follow:—

"The *Sinking Fund* is, it seems to "be kept up in all its glory, and *no addition whatever* is to be made to the "Public Debt, during the war, be its "duration ever so protracted! How is "this to be, Sir? You estimate (much "below what will be found necessary) "the annual supplies for the war at "26,000,000*l.* All this, say you, is to "come out of the taxes raised during "the year, except about 6,000,000*l.* "which is to be obtained by a loan "annually made to that amount; but, as "the debt annually created by these "loans, will be no greater in amount "than the part of the Public Debt "bought up annually by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, the *loans "will make no addition to the Debt!* It "is, I think, impossible that you should "not perceive the fallacy of this statement. What becomes of the part of "the Public Debt bought up by the "Commissioners? What, Sir, becomes "of the stock so bought up? Why, it "is carried to the account of the nation; it becomes the property of the "nation; the nation annually receives "the dividends on it, but *it first raises "the money to pay those dividends.* "And what becomes of the dividends, "after the nation has thus received "them from itself? Why they are disposed of in the buying up of more "stock, in order that the nation may "have an increase of dividends, which, "like the former, are to be paid by "itself to itself; and thus the delusive whirligig goes on, but without "ever lessening the Public Debt in "the amount of one single penny.—"If indeed, the stock bought up by "the Commissioners were destroyed; "if when so bought up, it instantly "*ceased to exist*, as nine hundred and "ninety-nine thousandths of the people imagine it does, then your statement would be fair; but while it is "in existence, and while the people "have regularly to pay taxes to discharge the dividends on it, where "is the difference whether the said "stock be called the property of individuals or the property of the nation? "where is the difference, as to the "6,000,000*l.* to be annually borrowed, "whether the interest of it be paid to "individuals or to the Commissioners "of the Sinking Fund? So that it "must be paid by the people, where "is the difference to them whether "it be paid on the right hand or on "the left?—Another question brings "your statement to the test. You "say there will be no increase to the "debt during the war, because stock, "equal in amount to that which is created by the annual loan of 6,000,000*l.* "will be annually bought up by the "Commissioners of the Sinking Fund. "Now, then, Sir, if this be really so, "why not take the produce of the Sinking Fund, during the war, and appropriate it to the public use, instead of a "loan to the same amount? Would not "this be much more simple and satisfactory than the round-about operation "of first making a loan 6,000,000l. "with all the Jewish cant of biddings "and bonuses and premiums and discounts, and, after having borrowed "the money, paying it to the Commissioners, in the shape of an annual "grant of 1,200,000l. dividends on "stock purchased up, and an annual "one per centum, on capitals created "since 1793? If your Sinking Fund "yields you 6,000,000l. annually, why "not take this 6,000,000l. for public "use, instead of first borrowing a like "sum, and then paying that like sum "off with the 6,000,000l. produced by "the Sinking Fund? Oh no! that "would *alarm* people; that would "*shake public credit.*' This then is "the touch-stone of the system: to "continue the operation of the Sinking "Fund *we must go on paying interest "on all the stock bought up, and to "be bought up, by the Commissioners*; "if, therefore, this continuation be "absolutely necessary to the *preservation of public credit*, that credit "must be destroyed, unless we continue to pay, as we now do, interest "*on all the stock that ever was created.* "When and how, then, is the debt to "experience that *diminution*, with "which, Sir, you thought proper to

" amuse the tame and stupid crowd,
" who were listening to you from the
" galleries? No, no, Sir; it is not in
" this Sinking Fund; it is not in this
" system of paying taxes in order to
" purchase stock for ourselves, and then
" to raise other taxes in order to pay
" the interest of that stock to ourselves;
" it is not in this shifting from one
" pocket to the other; it is not in a set
" of legerdemain tricks worthy of Bar-
" tholomew Fair; it is not here that
" we are to look for relief, but it is
" in your *tax upon the funds*, or, in
" other words, in that admirable *sponge*
" which you are now about to apply
" to *one twentieth part of the debt*.
" This, as Sir Walter Raleigh said,
" when he was approaching the City
" of St. Thomas, 'this is the true mine,
" my lads, and he's a fool that expects
" 'to find riches from any other!'
" This, to use your own words, applied
" to the Sinking Fund, " 'this is, an
" operation which carries with it the
" singular advantage of *executing its*
" *purposes for our relief in proportion*
" *to our pressure*;' for the more ex-
" pensive the war, the heavier, of
" course, will be the tax upon the
" Funds; and as all that part
" which becomes tax will no longer
" be debt, our relief will, as you truly
" observe, be expedited by our pres-
" sure! But, say the wiseacres of the
" City, there is none of the debt *spong-*
" *ed* off by this tax, which, however
" heavy it may become, will take only
" the *interest*, leaving the *principal* to-
" tally untouched; to which sapient
" observation you will, doubtless,
" reply, that, if they will but let you
" take the interest, they are perfectly
" welcome to do what they please
" with the principal. In short, Sir,
" that man must be afflicted with in-
" sanity or judicial blindness, who
" does not perceive, that to impose a
" direct tax of 5 per cent. upon the
" Funds is to wash away a twentieth
" part of the debt, which consists of
" those funds. You have, by calling
" this an *income* tax, a tax on *property*,
" &c. &c. succeeded in producing a
" confusion of ideas in the minds of
" the people, who viewing the mat-
" ter in the light in which you have
" placed it, seem to forget that the
" tax on income and property is drawn
" from something which the party al-
" ready has in his possession, whereas
" the tax on the Funds is, in fact, a
" *a portion of a debt due to him*, but
" which he has not received, and
" of which debt the State *is now about*
" *to pay him nineteen shillings in the*
" *pound*. And very good payment it
" is. It were to be wished, that every
" Bankrupt would pay nineteen shil-
" lings in the pound, and, if you
" should not make that rate good upon
" the principal, you have shewn the
" honesty of your intention, by mak-
" ing it good upon the interest. The
" truth is, Sir, and, if you have com-
" mon sense, it is a truth that you must
" perceive---that the National Debt has
" arrived at that point, beyond which
" it cannot go, and, that terrific bug-
" bear, a *National Bankruptcy*, the
" fear of seeing which has made this
" country submit to every species of
" wrong and of disgrace, is now ac-
" tually making its appearance, unac-
" companied with any of the dreadful
" effects, which base and interested
" men have endeavoured to persuade
" us it would inevitably produce.
" This measure of taxing the funds,
" alias paying nineteen shillings in the
" pound on the interest, this year, in
" order to pave the way for the total,
" and the only practicable, extinction
" of the public debt, has my unquali-
" fied applause; because, I am fully
" persuaded, that either that debt, or
" the independence of this nation,
" must be speedily destroyed. A
" small public debt is no harm to any
" country, nor, merely in a *pecuniary*
" point of view, is a large one, or
" even an enormous one, any harm;
" but, not so in its *political* effects:
" there a great public debt is a tre-
" mendous evil. This distinction,
" which has, within the last ten years,
" been so fatally illustrated in
" England, has, however, been too
" little attended to. Mr. Pitt saw
" the navigation, the commerce, the
" manufactures, all increase as the
" debt increased; the land became,

"year by year, better cultivated, the "houses, the roads, the carriages, the "clothing and food of the people, all "grew finer and better; but, he did "not perceive, that the wealth of the "country, while it was, in conse-"quence of having assumed a move-"able quality, extending the com-"mercial means and multiplying the "comforts and elegancies of life, was, "at the same time, from the same "cause, and in the same degree, pro-"ducing political decay.—Such, how-"ever, is now the fact; and, the only "objection I have to your statement, "is, the miserable delusion which "you still attempt to keep up, and "which, if your attempt succeed, can "be attended with no possible good, "while it may do infinite mischief. "Proceeding upon the maxim of Mr. "Pitt, you represent our public debt "as '*the best ally of the enemy*;' and, "therefore, say you, we will let the "enemy see—What? Not that we are "about to crush and annihilate this, "his '*best ally*,' but that we are going "to raise the taxes within the year, in "order to refrain from adding any "more strength to this ally. But, Sir, "I am happy to perceive, that, while "you are talking of this foolish plan, "while you really think you have "adopted it, you are actually pro-"ceeding upon a wise one; that, while "you think you are propping up the "funds, you are, in truth, undermin-"ing their foundation.——Shall I be "told, that I am here expressing a "wish to see the *credit* of my country "destroyed? Very like I may, but, "Sir, far different are my wishes. I "wish to see its true credit restored, "by the annihilation of its false "credit; I wish to see honourable "sentiments succeed to selfishness "and cowardice; and, if I am told of "the miseries that this measure will "bring upon those who are so unfor-"tunate as to be stockholders, I deny "that they will be a hundredth part "so great as is generally imagined; "because as the extinction will not "be effected all at once, people will "sell out, in proportion as their ap-"prehensions increase, and as those "who have nothing but the funds to "depend upon will be most timid, "they will sell first: so that at the "'close of the *market*,' a market "which, I trust, will never again be "opened, the loss will be found to be "pretty fairly distributed. Be the "miseries, however, arising from this "source, what they may, they cer-"tainly are inevitable; for, if the "debt be not, somehow or other, "annihilated, the nation must be en-"slaved, and then the annihilation "comes of course."

This was written nearly fourteen years ago.—Numerous have been the Essays, written between that time and this, to prove, that the Funding System, if not put an end to in time, would produce the ruin of the country. *Now* all the world acknowledges this great truth. Every man, who has only common sense, *now* sees that the Funding System has produced all the mischief. To it we owe *all* our calamities. This is now evident to the nation at large; and, in my work of *Paper against Gold*, I have proved, step by step, not only that the Funding System has been the cause of our calamities; but I have also proved that, from its very *nature*, it must be the cause of such calamities. All our troubles would vanish in a moment, if this system were at an end. The Ministers themselves would gladly get rid of their *standing army*; for, what is the use, or pretended use, of this army at home, in time of profound peace? Why, it is said, to preserve the tranquillity of the country. And what disturbs the country? Why, the miseries of the people. And what makes the people miserable? Why, the great weight of taxes and the fluctuations in the Currency. And what makes the great weight of taxes and the fluctuations in the Currency? Why, the Debt and the Paper-money. And what makes the Debt and the Paper-money? Why, the *Funding System*. Thus it is to this system, that we owe the standing army and every evil that oppresses us; the whole of that combination o evils, which now astounds even the

who have been anticipating those evils for many years.

Reformers, indeed! It is not *Reformers*, men, generally speaking, without riches, who can thus agitate society, and shake a great state to its very foundations. It must be something far more powerful than *speeches* and *writings* to produce effects like these. Besides, Reformers have been at work for forty years, and they once had Mr. PITT and the DUKE OF RICHMOND at their head. No: it is the *Debt*, the *Funding System;* these are the causes of all the dangers, which the ancient establishments of the Country now feel. The *Church* complains of an *intended law*, levelled against it. The Clergy are called upon, in the St. James's Chronicle, *to meet* in the Deaneries *all over the kingdom;* to hold *adjourned meetings;* and to protest against the *intended law*. And, meet they will too, and not one moment too soon. What has produced this intended measure against their property? Why, the sufferings of the farmers; and, as was before shown, these sufferings have arisen from the *Funding System*.

What folly, as well as what impudence, then, is it, to cry out against *Reformers!* As if they could add to, or lessen, the great dangers which hang over the state. There is a *green bag* full of papers, it is said laid before Parliament, proving the existence of plots against the "*whole frame* "*and laws of the Constitution.*" So says the COURIER, who appears to have had his nose in the bag, even before it was carried down. There may be, for any thing that I know to the contrary, some wild projects on foot for altering the frame of the government; but, I am very sure, that they are all vanity and nothingness, when compared with the *Funding System;* and, if a clear statement relative to the Debt and the Taxes and the effects of these had been put into the Green Bag, and had been strongly recommended to the attention of the two Houses, it would, it appears to me, have been much more likely to tend to the preservation of tranquillity, than any other step that could have been taken.

Put down *Meetings* indeed! Alas! if such a measure, painful as it is to one's feelings as an Englishman, could *possibly* tend to restore the nation to happiness, or to lessen its unparalleled miseries, I would hail it as a boon; for, now the suffering is too dreadful to be thought of without deep mental affliction. *You* affect to "*trace*" all appearances of *discontent* to the *Reformers*. It is true, that *you* feel no misery; but, is there none any where else? A few plain facts will suffice; and they now lie before me *in print*.

"The poor house at Bilston is so full of "occupants that there is not room for "them all to sleep at the same time; but "an equal number of them retire to rest "in rotation."

"At a meeting of the inhabitants of Wil-"ton, held on Monday last for the purpose "of considering of some mode of alleviat-"ing the distresses of the town, which "were occasioned by the increase of its "poor-rates, it was ordered that the poor "should be employed by *sending them in* "*rotation to the different householders*, in pro-"portion to what they were rated at. This "mode of employment is called, by labour-"ers in husbandry, '*working on the stem.*'"

In the City of Coventry, on a population of about 20,000 there are more than 8,000 *paupers*.

In some parishes, the poor men are *lodged* and kept *separately* from their *wives*.

But as an authentic and ever-to-be-remembered statement of shocking facts, and as an incontrovertible proof of the awful consequences of a *Funding System*, I insert the following paper, word for word:

"*Condensed Statement of the Poor of* "*St. Mary, Islington; as prepared* "*by the Committee appointed for* "*that purpose, Jan.* 31, 1817.

"From Examination of the different Dis-"trict Reports, it was found, that

"730 Poor Families, consisting of
"1371 Adults,
"1712 Children, comprising a total of
"3083 Individuals, had been visited, a "large portion of whom required, and had "received relief.

"It also appeared, that there were *totally*

"out of employ about 300 persons, who were "*not only out of employ*, but almost naked, "without a bed to lie upon, and WITHOUT "A PENNY TO PURCHASE BREAD.

"In addition to those totally out of em- "ploy, the Cases of many who are only par- "tially employed are numerous and very dis- "tressing, some of them earning only a few "shillings a week, with six or eight helpless "children.

"There are 93 families that have from five "to nine children.

"There are also 181 families that receive "Parochial relief, the total amounting to "21*l* 15*s*. 6*d*. per week. This does not in- "clude the casual relief given by the Parish "officers, nor what is distributed by the "different benevolent funds in the Parish.

"To assist in ascertaining the distress of "the Parish, enquiry was made into the "amount of Goods pledged, and it was found "that in the

"1st District, 120 families,			
"the amount was	£.209	3	0
"2d District, 44 families	39	9	0
"3d District, 78 families	27	0	0
"4th District, 220 families ..	400	0	0
"5th District, 138 families ..	291	13	6

"To ascertain exactly the amount of goods "pledged has been found impossible, but "considering that three-fourths of the 4th "District remain unreported in this parti- "cular, and one-fourth amounts to 400*l*. there "is no doubt of the amount being at least "1500*l*. in the whole Parish, comprising "pledges for various sums, from THREE "HALFPENCE to 20*l*. The article here "alluded to, was the property of *a poor but "respectable widow*, who travelled *nearly three "miles*, from the extremity of the parish "where she resided, TO PROCURE THREE "HALFPENCE UPON IT!!

"The Committee intended to have given "some particular Cases of distress, to convey "to the Parish some idea of their nature and "extent, and of the NECESSITY FOR "FARTHER CONTRIBUTION; but they "have found the Cases of extreme poverty "and privation SO NUMEROUS, that they "must confine themselves to a general repre- "sentation of facts, and in doing this, for "reasons which will be sufficiently obvious, "they will avoid the mention of any parti- "cular names.

"The Committee have met with unfortu- "nate Tradesmen of irreproachable charac- "ter, sinking, and pining, in secret, with nu- "merous young children, as 5 to 7, the Wife "ready to lie in, the Husband in ill health, "rent and many little debts owing, without "any means to pay them. Other Families "where the Husband is nearly 70 years of "age, the Wife ill in bed, a Child or two to "maintain, and the whole earnings not ex- "ceeding 7*s*. a week. Others, where they "have, by distress, been obliged to pawn "almost every necessary, to provide in the "interim a little sustenance, who are willing "to work, but can find no employment; and "some Families have been found, where the "poor people, with hardly any thing to cover "their nakedness, have not even a bed of "the poorest kind, but lie upon straw or "shavings, all their little earnings being un- "equal to the cravings of hunger.

"Among these are *many people who have "seen better days*, and have *endeavoured by "every means to avoid becoming burthensome* "to their Parish or their Neighbours, and "who, it is to be feared *would have actually "perished*, but for the investigation to which "the present Institution has given rise.

"Some of these Cases, with a little pecu- "niary aid, might be enabled again to be- "come useful members of the community; "but such is the extent of the present dis- "tress, that the first object should be to "meet those Cases of distress, under which, "without relief, *the sufferers are in danger of "perishing*. The liberality of the Parish "will it is hoped, effect this; and if, in ad- "dition, some relief of the kind hinted above "could be extended afterwards to DECAY- "ED AND UNFORTUNATE TRADES- "MEN, who by a little pecuniary aid could "be restored to usefulness, the benefit would "be incalculable."

(By Order.)
R. OLDERSHAW, Jun. AND N. THOMPSON, Jun. } Secretaries.

And yet (Oh! impudence!) the Re- formers are accused of *exaggerating* the distresses of the country, and the COURIER abuses Lord Grey for dwel- ling on the public *distress*, as being the real cause of the prevailing dis- contents! Alas! my good Life-and- Fortune-men, it is not *your* lives and fortunes that have been sacrificed. You pledged *your* lives and fortunes to carry on wars and make loans; but, it is not *your* lives and fortunes that have been in danger.

Alas! what can Green Bags, or the result of the opening of their contents; what can these do towards the resto- ration of happiness to the people? If all meetings, all petitioning, all writing, all printing, all speaking, all whispering, were instantly put a stop to, not one single moment would that measure retard that steady march which great causes are now keeping on towards great and inevitable con- sequences. This march might, in my opinion, be checked, by a radical Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament; but without that Reform, my decided opinion is, that it cannot.

You seem to imagine, that the

people are wholly ignorant of the real source of their calamity. Read, then, the following paragraph in the Resolutions that preceded an excellent Petition just agreed to in the *City of Coventry*.

"That whilst the holders of every "article, purchased or manufactured "when *bank notes were depreciated*, "have been compelled to reduce their "price to the standard of *sterling* "*money*; whilst every individual "charged with debts contracted at "the same period, has been also "obliged to pay their full nominal "amount in sterling money, thus sus- "taining a loss equivalent to the dif- "ference of the real value of the cur- "rency, at the respective periods: "The distress, consequent upon this "natural operation of causes, over "which the sufferers had no con- "troul, is considerably increased, by "their being still called upon to pay "*in taxes*, their share of the *full in-* "*terest of the debt* (called national) "contracted by the Government, "*principally in the depreciated cur-* "*rency*."

Thus, you see, the matter is understood by the people at large. They can "*trace*" as well, and a little better, than you can, or, at least, than you choose to do it; and, though the members of the two Houses have not *yet* spoken *out*, you may be sure that they will do it *before they separate*. You seem to imagine, that the leading men amongst the Reformers wish to carry their views into execution by *assault*. They must be great fools if they do, seeing what an evident tendency there is in all the circumstances of the times, to assist their views more and more every day. It is right to petition for Reform; it is right to endeavour to obtain it by all lawful means; it is right to bring forward the measure in a fair and distinct form. But, it is wholly unnecessary to be *impatient*, seeing that it *must* come at no very distant day, and that, too, with very little opposition. Whatever may be your *hopes*, this agitation about the Reformers and the Spenceans will not last many weeks. It is not the Green Bag but the *Budget*, which will soon become the interesting object, and we shall see, before this Session of Parliament is over, whether the Political Economy of Mr. Colquhoun, the Police Justice, or mine be the most sound and rational.

When you have taken time to cogitate on all this, to look back and to look forward, I beg your attention to the two Petitions here following, which have been laid before the House of Commons, and to the Letter of Mr. HUNT, which has been received by Lord Sidmouth, "*Fair Play is a* "*Jewel*," you know, every where, except in 'Change Alley.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament Assembled.

The Petition of Thomas Dugood, of the Parish of St. Paul, Covent Garden, in the City of Westminster,

Humbly Sheweth,

That your Petitioner is a parentless and friendless boy, seventeen years of age, who, until lately seized by two Police Officers and sent to prison by the Police, obtained the honest means of living by the sale of Religious and Moral Tracts, which he used to purchase of Mr. Collins of Paternoster Row.

That your Petitioner has, for more than four months last past, lodged, and he still lodges, at the house of Keeran Shields, who lives at No. 13, Gee's Court, Oxford Street, and who is a carter to Mr. White of Mortimar-street, and who is also a Watchman in Marybone Parish.

That your Petitioner has never in his life lived as a vagrant, but has always had a settled home, has always pursued an honest and visible means of getting his living, has always been, and is ready to prove that he always has been an industrious, a peaceable, sober, honest and orderly person.

That, on the tenth of January 1817, your Petitioner, for having pulled down a Posting Bill, entitled "*Mr. Hunt hissed out of the* "*City of Bristol*," was committed by Mr. Sellon to the New Prison, Clerkenwell, where he was kept on bread and water and compelled to lie on the bare boards until the twenty-second of the same month, when he was tied, with about fifty others, to a long rope, or cable, and marched to Hicks's Hall, and there let loose.

That your Petitioner has often heard it said, that the law affords protection to the poor as well as to the rich, and that, if unable to obtain redress any where else, every subject of His Majesty has the road of petition open to him; Therefore your Petitioner, being unable to obtain redress in any other manner for the grievous wrongs done him by

the Magistrate of the Police, most humbly implores your Honourable House to afford him protection and redress, and to that end he prays your Honourable House to permit him to prove at the bar of your Honourable House all and several the allegations contained in this his most humble Petition.

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

THOMAS DUGOOD.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of Henry Hunt, of Middleton Cottage, in the County of Southampton,

Humbly sheweth,

That your petitioner, being ready to prove at the bar of your honourable House, that there has been carried on a conspiracy against his character, and eventually aimed at his life, by certain persons, receiving salaries out of the public money, and acting in their public capacity, and expending for this vile purpose, a portion of the taxes; and there being as appears to him, no mode of his obtaining a chance of security, other than those which may be afforded him by Parliament, he humbly sues to your honourable House to yield him your protection.

That your petitioner has always been a loyal and faithful subject, and a sincere and zealous friend of his country. That, at a time, during the first war against France, when there were great apprehensions of invasion, and when circular letters were sent round to farmers and others to ascertain what sort and degree of aid each would be willing to afford to the government in case of such emergency, your petitioner, who was then a farmer in Wiltshire, did not, as others did, make an offer of a small part of his moveable property, but that, really believing his country to be in danger, he, in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Pembroke, freely offered his all, consisting of several thousands of sheep, a large stock of horned cattle, upwards of twenty horses, seven or eight waggons and carts, with able and active drivers, several hundreds of quarters of corn and grain, and his own person besides, all to be at the entire disposal of the Lord Lieutenant; and this your petitioner did without any reserved claim to compensation, it being a principle deeply rooted in his heart, that all property and even life itself, ought to be considered as nothing when put in competition with the safety and honour of our country. And your petitioner further begs leave to state to your honourable House, that, at a subsequent period, namely, in the year 1803, when an invasion of the country was again apprehended, and when it was proposed to call out volunteers to serve within certain limits of their houses, your petitioner called around him the people of the village of Enford, in which he lived, and that all the men in that parish (with the exception of three) capable of bearing arms, amounting to more than two hundred in number, immediately enrolled themselves, and offered to serve, not only within the district, but in any part of the kingdom, where an enemy might land, or be expected to land, and this offer was by your petitioner transmitted to Lord Pembroke, who expressed to your petitioner his great satisfaction at the said offer, and informed him that he would make a point of communicating the same to his Majesty's Ministers.

That your petitioner, still actuated by a sincere desire to see his country free and happy, and holding a high character in the world, has lately been using his humble endeavours to assist peaceably and legally in promoting applications to Parliament for a Reform in your honourable House, that measure appearing to your petitioner to be the only effectual remedy for the great and notorious evils, under which the country now groans, and for which evils, as no one attempts to deny their existence, so no one, as far as your petitioner has heard, has attempted to suggest any *other* remedy.

That your petitioner, in pursuit of this constitutional, and, as he hopes and believes, laudable object, (an object for which, if need be, he is resolved to risk his life against unlawful violence) lately took part in a public meeting of the City of Bristol, of which he is a freeholder; and that though a large body of regular troops and of yeomanry cavalry were placed in a menacing attitude near the place of our Meeting, the Meeting was conducted and concluded in the most peaceable and orderly manner, and the result of it was a petition to your honourable House, voluntarily signed by upwards of twenty thousand men, which petition has been presented to, and received by, your honourable House.

That your petitioner, who had met with every demonstration of public good-will and approbation in the said City, was surprised to see in the public newspapers, an account of a boy having been sent to jail by certain Police Officers and Justices for having pulled down a posting bill, which alleged your petitioner to have been hissed out of the City of Bristol, and containing other gross falsehoods and infamous calumnies on the character of your petitioner, calculated to excite great hatred against your petitioner, and to prepare the way for his ruin and destruction.

That your petitioner who trusts that he has himself always acted an open and manly part, and who has never been so base as to make an attack upon any one, who had not the fair means of defence, feeling indignant at this act of partiality and oppression, came to London with a view of investigating the matter, and this investigation having taken place, he now alleges to your honourable House, that the aforesaid posting bills, con-

taining the infamous calumnies aforesaid, were printed by *J. Downes*, who is the Printer to the Police; that the Bill-sticker received the bills from the said Downes, who paid him for sticking them up; that the Bill-sticker was told by the said *Downes* that there would be somebody *to watch him* to see that he stuck them up; that Police Officers were set to watch to prevent the said Bills from being pulled down; that some of these Bills were carried to the Police Office at Hatton Garden, and there kept by the Officers, to be produced in proof against persons who should be taken up for pulling them down; that Thomas Dugood was seized, sent to jail, kept on bread and water, and made to lie on the bare boards from the tenth to the twenty-second of January, 1817, when he was taken out with about fifty other persons, tied to a long rope or cable, and marched to Hicks's Hall, where he was let loose, and that his only offence was pulling down one of these bills; that a copy of Dugood's commitment was refused to your petitioner; that your petitioner was intentionally directed to a wrong prison to see the boy Dugood; that the Magistrate, William Marmaduke Sellon, who had committed Dugood, denied repeatedly that he knew any thing of the matter, and positively asserted that Dugood had been committed by another magistrate, a Mr. Turton, who Mr. Sellon said, was at his house very ill, and not likely to come to the office for some time.

That your honourable House is besought by your petitioner, to bear in mind the recently-exposed atrocious conspiracies carried on by officers of the Police against the lives of innocent men, and your petitioner is confident that your honourable House will, in these transactions, see the clear proofs of a foul conspiracy against the character and life of your petitioner, carried on by persons in the public employ, appointed by the Crown, and removeable at its pleasure, and that this conspiracy has been also carried on by the means of public money.

And, therefore, as the only mode of doing justice to the petitioner and to the public in a case of such singular atrocity, your petitioner prays your honourable House that he may be permitted to prove (as he is ready to do) all and singular the aforesaid allegations at the Bar of your honourable House, and that if your honourable House shall find the allegations to be true, you will be pleased to address his Royal Highness to cause the aforesaid Magistrate to be dismissed from his office.

And your Petitioner shall ever pray.

London, Feb. 4, 1817.

MY LORD,

Having read in the news-papers, a report of the speech of your Lordship's brother, from which it appears that the complaint, relative to the boy Dugood, was expected to be made at your Lordship's office at an earlier period, it becomes my duty to inform your Lordship, that the channel of application for redress has not been changed from any want, on my part, of confidence in the humanity and justice of your Lordship. But, my Lord, seeing the malignant and cowardly means that were using, in places I will not particularly name, to misrepresent my views, to blacken my character, and to point me out for destruction, I thought it necessary to proceed in the most prompt manner to make as public as possible the machinations of some of my enemies; and this was the cause, my Lord, of my bringing the matter before Parliament, and not any want of reliance (either on my part or on the part of the other gentleman to whom your Lordship's brother alluded) on the disposition of your Lordship to do me as well as the injured boy ample justice as far as lay in your Lordship's power. Affidavits of all the circumstances were carefully prepared *in order to the submitting of the case and leaving it wholly to your Lordship's wisdom and justice:* but my Lord, when I saw the press, under various guises, and various names, endeavouring to create an unfounded alarm; by endeavouring to trace to me by the use of the most false and infamous imputations, every act of violence committed by every body, it was time for me to take the most prompt of those small means of defence which I still had in my power.

It has never, my Lord, been my intention to take any step, which should seem to say, that I doubted of the impartiality and integrity of your Lordship, or of any of your colleagues. I scorn, my Lord to be the tool of any faction, and I have no factious or selfish views, and as to the charge of disloyalty, always so ready on the lips of those who are unprovided with fact or with argument, it is a charge which nothing but the rankest of cowardice shall ever shelter from chastisement when openly made against me in any way that puts the accuser upon a legal level with myself. Let the base calumniator come but within the reach of the law, "and, if he 'scape, then God forgive "him too!"

I have, my Lord, a petition of my own, which I intend to have presented to the House of Commons to-night. I submit it to the perusal of your Lordship's brother, if your Lordship will be so condescending as to let it be handed to him. When he has read it, I shall feel greatly obliged if he will have the goodness to present it to the House of Commons *this evening*. If he decline to do it, I will endeavour so cause it to be done through some other channel.

When that has been done, my Lord, I am ready with affidavits to support most amply, every allegation contained in my own Petition, and also in that of the poor and oppressed Boy, Dugood, and shall not only be willing, but shall anxiously desire, that the affair may then be left entirely to the wisdom and the well-known humanity and conciliating disposition of your Lordship.

But, my Lord, while I am thus ready to repose confidence in the integrity and honest views of others; while I manifest no desire, and never have manifested any desire, to carp at the acts of the king's ministers; to pick, as ambitious and selfish men endeavour to do, little holes in their coat; while I am neither so rude nor so malicious as to seem to suspect them of a wish to act partially or unjustly, it would be hard indeed if I were not to be permitted to claim some portion of acknowledged good intentions for myself. 'The most ardent zeal is never accompanied with the utmost degree of circumspection;' but, my Lord, though the former quality may now and then be attended with its inconveniences, the latter can never be attended with any great benefit either to the king or the country. In standing forward, or, rather, in coming forward at the call of my countrymen in distress, I have violated no law; I have used no incentives to riot or to violence of any sort; I have not proposed or given the smallest countenance to, any projects or propositions for "*dividing the land*," or for subverting any establishment or institution: and your Lordship has in your own office, furnished by your own under officers, the *proofs*, that, the man who attempts to impute such acts to me is a vile and cowardly calumniator. I have assisted in the promoting of Petitions for a Reform of the Commons' House of Parliament. This I have done with special care to promote, at the same time, peace, good order, and a respect for the laws. I belong to, and am connected with, no Clubs, no Conciliabules, no secret Associations, of all which I disapprove. What I have done has been done in the face of day, and, while I know my intention to be disinterested and honest, I shall not refrain from resenting, in every way that I am able, and that the law allows of, the conduct of those who impute to me contrary intentions.

I am loath to trespass upon your Lordship's time; but, seeing that the malignity of my and my country's and my king's enemies, has made so obscure an individual so very conspicuous, I hope it will not be regarded as an inexcusable intrusion if I pray your Lordship to look back to the *real source* of all the trouble which has arisen from the oppression of the friendless boy, Dugood. That he was imprisoned and most cruelly treated for pulling down an infamous libel on me, and for *nothing else*, I have affidavits, ready to be submitted to your Lordship, most amply to prove. That libel was published because I had taken a conspicuous part in a Meeting at Bristol, which Meeting was conducted in the most peaceable and orderly manner, and produced a Petition signed by more than twenty thousand men, which Petition the House of Commons have received. That Petition prayed for a Reform of that House, without even a hint, or any meaning by implication, to meddle with any thing else. And yet, my Lord, a Police Officer, named Limbrick, a common thief-taker, had the audacity, even in the presence of the Magistrates to insinuate *that I was an enemy of my king and country*, and this was *all* he had to say in his *defence* for his part of the oppression of the poor Boy; but, audacious as this was, I am sorry to perceive, that the thief-taker has had imitators amongst persons, from whom a very different sort of conduct might have been expected.

As I perceive, that a Report is to be made to the House of Commons of all the circumstances of this case, I beg leave to inform your Lordship, that I shall be ready, any time to morrow, to attend with the affidavits before-mentioned; and I have only to add my humble request, that your Lordship will be pleased to cause this Letter to be laid before the House of Commons at the time of the laying before it that Report:

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most humble
And most obedient Servant,
HENRY HUNT.

These documents all speak for themselves, and require no comments, especially after the manly and able manner in which DUGOOD's Petition was introduced by Lord FOLKESTONE, and that of Mr. HUNT by Lord COCHRANE.

And now, Life-and-Fortune-Men, I take my leave of you, for the present, and I do this with the less reluctance seeing how soon you will, I am sure, fall into more *able*, or, at least more *powerful* hands; I mean the two Houses of Parliament.

WM. COBBETT.

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

NOTICE.

All the *back Numbers*, from No. 15 of Vol. 31 to the present time, are now ready for delivery. The former part of Volume 31 is also reprinted; and, on any day after the 28th instant, that part may be had separately. It comprises the time from the first of July to the 12th of October; and this former part, with the separate Numbers, from 15 to 26, make up Volume 31 complete, with a Table of Contents, Title Page and all.—The *price* of the former Part is 2*s.* retail, and 1*s.* 6*d.* to the trade.—The *whole Volume* may also be had, bound in boards, *price* 4*s.* retail, and 3*s.* to the Trade.—These Parts, or Whole Volumes, will be supplied in the same manner as the Weekly Pamphlet is supplied. The first Number of "Paper against Gold" is published this week; and the work will be complete and ready for delivery to those persons who want the Book, in one fortnight from this time.

A LETTER

TO

EARL GROSVENOR.

Thanks for his Lordship's defence of the People.—Fair Play's a jewel.—The Question of Reform fairly argued.—Annual Parliaments.—Universal Suffrage.—Mr. Brougham's Sincerity.—Foul conduct of the Corrupt Writers.—Green Bag and Cheap Publications.

London, Feb. 19. 1817.

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's speech, as given in the newspapers of last week, has given great satisfaction to every candid man in the country, and to no man more than to him who has now the honour of addressing you. If people are in error, it is not by misrepresentations and revilings and abuse that they are to be convinced of their errors. This desirable end is not to be arrived at by imputing to the leaders seditious designs and to the people the grossest of ignorance. This is not the way to silence the former, or to gain over the latter. If we, who hold for *annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage* be in error, your Lordship has taken the right course to make us patient, at least, and to wait to hear what can be urged in opposition to our opinions. The flippancy and rancour and affected contempt, with which we have been assailed by corrupt and scrambling men, have only tended to excite our just resentment against them, and, which is worse, to make us confound with those corrupt scramblers, all other persons, who appear to be co-operating with them in general.

The cause, which your Lordship has pursued is precisely the opposite of that of the persons here alluded to. The mildness of your language, the justice of your sentiments, the whole tenor of your manly declarations call upon us to listen to you with the greatest respect, and, if we still retain our opinions, to show by fair statement and reasoning that the grounds of those opinions are such as to warrant us in differing, as to those opinions, from those which your Lordship has so explicitly and fairly expressed.

You have been, in your reported speech, pleased to observe, my Lord, that a Reform of Parliament of *some sort* is necessary and just; and, that you consider the *seven years Parliaments* "as a *direct infringement of* "*the Constitution*, as a *violation of* "*the rights and liberties of the peo-* "*ple*, and that the Act, sanctioning "those parliaments *ought not to re-* "*main in the Statute Book*;" and, your Lordship is pleased to add, that you would give your support to a Bill for *triennial* Parliaments; but, as to *annual Parliaments* you do not think them agreeable to the Constitution; and that, as to Universal Suffrage, you

cannot help calling it *universal impracticability*. But, though you differ with us in opinion upon these points, your Lordship's words, which I cannot help repeating here, convince us, that, while you would leave our minds free, you have a mind of your own, open to receive whatever we have to urge in defence of our opinions. "But "because he differed with others on "that subject, was he therefore (as "was well expressed by a Noble Per- "son on a former evening, in a most "eloquent and convincing speech) "*to wish to see those with whom he* "*differed, imprisoned and gibbetted,* "*hung, drawn and quartered?* Was "he to wish *to see a Judge Jefferies,* "or *one acting in the spirit and* "*power of a Judge Jefferies*, placed "on the Bench, for the purpose of "*committing a legal murder on these* "*people?* For instance, should he "wish to see MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, "whom he understood to be a most "respectable person, because he "entertained such contrary senti- "ments, and endeavoured to pro- "pagate them through the country, "should *he wish to see his mouth* "*closed*, not by argument and fair "discussion, *but by the bloody hands* "*of an executioner?*—The thought "was *shocking, monstrous*, and *dia-* "*bolical!* As the fortitude of the "people had been great under their "difficulties and privations, and suf- "ferings, so *had their conduct in all* "*places, where meetings for retrench-* "*ment and reform had been held,* "*been most exemplary;* and, indeed "it was *remarkable and even surpri-* "*sing that it should have been so*, con- "sidering the great numbers that have "been assembled in various places, "and the warmth that naturally arises "in large bodies when assembled from "various quarters to discuss matters, "where grievances are felt. This was "at least *no symptom of disaffection,* "and he trusted from *such patient* "*discussion much good would arise.*"

My Lord, these words will endear your name to the people of this kingdom; for, it is nothing short of the *whole people*, in the proper sense of the word, of whose conduct your Lordship has here spoken; and I venture to assure your Lordship, that the satisfaction, which the people will derive from your just description and your high commendation of their own conduct will still fall short of their gratitude to your Lordship for the manner, in which you have been pleased to speak of that venerable patriot, that learned, able, wise, disinterested, brave, unconquerable, true-hearted Englishman, MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, whose private life has been as amiable and as spotless, as his public exertions have been long, arduous, and valuable. It is indeed "monstrous and diabolical" to think of *answering* such a man by the hands of an executioner, and scarcely less monstrous, or less diabolical, to think of *answering* him by *shutting his mouth* by force of any sort, or to think of answering *any body else* by similar means. The *folly*, too, is equal to the wickedness of such attempts; for, is it possible to suppose, that, if the people have been induced *to believe* any thing, no matter what, they will be induced to *unbelieve* it by the use of *force* to compel their teachers to hold their tongues? or to lay down their pens? No, my Lord, there is something so unfair, so unjust, so tyrannical, and so insolent in all propositions tending to encourage such attempts, that the very tamest drop of blood in the very tamest of hearts is roused into resentment at the very idea.

In your Lordship we have a fair, an open, a manly, a truly noble adversary, not of us, but of some of our doctrines; and, therefore, my Lord, I shall proceed, with great respect, to state to you the reasons on which I conceive those doctrines to be well founded; and this I shall do much less with a desire to triumph in the dispute, than with the hope of contributing some little matter towards the gaining over to our side a person of such great weight and such high character as your Lordship.

In so manfully and truly stating, that *seven year* Parliaments are "*a* "*direct infringement of the Constitution* "*and a violation of the rights and li-*"*berties of the people*," you have spared us the trouble of contending, that we have *a right to a Reform of some sort*. Nor is this a small matter, seeing, that, for years past, *all* reform has been, in another quarter, asserted to be *wholly unnecessary*, and that the whole thing, as it now stands, *is agreeable to the Constitution*.

Seeing, then, that the thing, as it now stands, is "a direct infringe-"ment of the Constitution and *a* "*violation of the rights and liberties of* "*the people*," we come naturally to consider what sort of a Reform would reinstate the people in the possession of those rights and liberties, of which possession they are now deprived? We say *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*: your Lordship thinks that the former are *not agreeable to the Constitution*, and that the latter is *impracticable*. These are the two points, which, with great respect and submission, I propose to argue with your Lordship; and, not to argue them upon mere precedent or ancient usage, but also upon the ground of equity, and of the fitness of the things, considered in their natural effects under the circumstances of the nation in these times in which we live.

That parliaments *annually chosen* were the ancient law of the land is, I think, evident from the very words of the Statute of the 4th year of Edward III. Chapter 14, passed in the year 1331; for though the word *holden* once a year is made use of, it is, nevertheless clearly proved by Mr. Granville Sharp, in his "*Declaration of the People's* "*rights*," and which was published in 1775, that parliaments were *newly chosen* every time that they were called. He has there cited several instances of new parliaments being summoned *year after year successively* by a *new writ of election*; he mentioned some years in which *two*, or *more*, new parliaments had been summoned by *different writs of election*, in the space of a single year. And that learned and venerable lawyer and excellent man, Mr. BARON MASERES, in speaking upon this subject, says: "so that it may truly be affirm-"ed, that, in those ancient times, the "people enjoyed the privilege *of* "*electing new representatives in par-*"*liament*, either *once in every year*, "or more than once, if the king "found it necessary to have another "parliament before the end of the "year."

These remarks of Mr. BARON MASERES are to be found in a new quarto edition, published a few years ago by White in Fleet Street, of GENERAL LUDLOW's famous Letters in Defence of the Long Parliament in their conduct against Charles the First, in which Letters also LUDLOW insists upon the people's rights to "*annual parliaments*."

Now, my Lord, were LUDLOW and GRANVILLE SHARP, and is Mr. BARON MASERES; are these to be looked upon as "*wild* and *visionary* men?" Are they, too, to be considered as "*designing and evil-minded per-*"*sons?*" Or, are they to be numbered amongst the "*deluded*" and the "*seduced?*" Where will Mr. Perry and Mr. Brougham be pleased to station Mr. Baron Maseres? will they place him upon the list of the "*Knaves*" or upon that of the "*Fools*" of the day?

However, my Lord, I am ready to acknowledge, that, though the ancient laws and usages of the land are decidedly for annual parliaments, such parliaments ought not to be contended for, if it can be shown, that the restoration of them would now be *unfit*; that it would be productive, or tend towards, any mischief to the nation, or to any of the great and settled laws and establishments of the land, and especially if it were at all likely to introduce that strife, confusion, and anarchy, of which our virulent opponents affect to be so much afraid. But, my Lord, *why* should annual elections lead to such consequences? It is the opinion of Mr. BARON MA-

SERES, that annual parliaments would have a precisely opposite tendency and effect. "Now," observes that truly learned man, "if this good old law "were to be revived, would there be "any danger of such violent and "expensive and often ruinous con- "tests, at the time of Elections, as "are seen in the present mode of pro- "ceeding, when the general Elections "occur only once in about six years? "For, as the representatives would "be *constantly disposed to cultivate* "*the good opinion of their Consti-* "*tuents*, and, by their conduct in "Parliament, to promote their inter- "ests and wishes, as far as their own "consciences and judgments would "allow them; in order to be re-elect- "ed by them in the next year, it is "probable that there would be much "fewer contested Elections, and chan- "ges of the Representatives, than there "are at present. And from *the har-* "*mony* that would generally subsist, "between the Members of Parliament "and their Electors, the *Dignity and* "*Respectability of the House of Com-* "*mons would be increased*, and the "confidence of the people, in the "wisdom and uprightness of their mea- "sures *would be restored;* and the re- "solutions that would be taken by "them would be generally allowed to "be in reality, what they are now "*often called and pretended to be*, "the true expressions, or declara- "tions, of *the sense of the people at* "*large*, on the subjects to which they "relate. It seems probable, there- "fore, that the revival of this good "old law, *for chusing new Parlia-* "*liaments every year, would be attend-* "*ed with very happy consequences*, "*and give general satisfaction to the* "*nation.*"

I think your Lordship will agree with me, that these are the reflections of a sober-minded friend of his country; and, indeed, my Lord, the truth of them appears to me to be so obvious, that I cannot help thinking, that it must strike every one who reads with impartiality. Was it ever known that the *shortening* of the *duration* of any *obligation to obedience* tended to discontent, restiveness and violence on the side of the *bounden party?* Men who have the power of choosing new masters *weekly*, are much less disposed to serious discontents than those who can choose them only yearly; and those who can choose them *yearly*, require a much less rigorous law to bind them than is required to bind those who are held to their masters for *seven years*, though there is in this case a sort of prize at the end of the term of obedience.—Your Lordship has seen how readily soldiers have enlisted for a *limited time*, and how backward they have been to give up their right of choice *for life*. In short, it is notorious, that men submit for *a short time*, peaceably and quietly, and even cheerfully, to that which they would die rather than submit to, if the period of submission were known to be of long duration, and the mere chance of redress removed to a distant day.—"*Never mind! It is only for a few* "*months!*" Is not this the language of all mankind? is not this the language of every human being, who is aggrieved, or who thinks himself aggrieved, and who knows not the day of redress, or of his seeking redress, is at hand? Is not this the effect, the *invariable* effect, of a short duration of every kind of obligation to submission or obedience? How often has every gentleman, every employer of every description, every occupier, every landlord, every guest at an inn, said "No matter! It is *not worth while to* "*quarrel.* I shall be rid of the con- "nection by *such a time*, and I will "take care to avoid the same in fu- "ture." How often, how many scores of times, has every man, be he who or what he may, said this during his life-time!

Why, then, should it be supposed, that this tranquillizing effect would not be produced by annual parliaments? Why should it be supposed, that the very cause of content and tranquillity in *all other cases* should be the cause of discontent and uproar and confu-

sion in this particular case? Why should it be supposed, that the laws of nature herself would become perverted and produce their opposite in the breasts of Englishmen? I will not insult your Lordship by appearing to believe, that you will adopt, much less act upon, any such supposition.

If there are people to suppose, that the House of Commons would, by annual elections, be so *varying* for ever in its members, that the laws would be *continually changing*, I beg your Lordship, besides the weight of the observation of Mr. BARON MASERES, to remember the old maxim, that "*short* reckonings make long *friends*," than which a truer maxim never dropped from the lips of wisdom; and the experience of all mankind shew, that those quarrel least who have the most frequent power of adjusting their affairs. The Legislative Assembly of Pennsylvania, for instance, is elected by new writs annually; and, I venture to assure your Lordship, that new faces and changes of laws are much less frequent there than in the House of Commons in England. The government of Pennsylvania is no very *new* thing. It is as it was originally formed by the famous Englishman, whose name the State bears. He carried to those deserts the *laws of England*. He built his government upon those laws, while the Stuarts were trampling them under foot at home. *He* knew that annual parliaments were the law of the land. He planted them in his new domain; there they have lived and flourished, and under them a system of sway, which has produced a scene of social tranquillity and happiness such as is to be found in no other part of the world. Because I refer to this instance in support of my argument, I am not to be supposed to desire *other* changes here after the model of Pennsylvania; but, as far as the instance goes, it is, I presume, entitled to all the weight to which any case in point can be entitled.

As I am not aware of any objection, save those that I have here noticed, against annual parliaments, I shall now proceed to the *second point*, mentioned in your Lordship's speech, namely, *Universal Suffrage*. And, here, suffer me to take the liberty to refer your Lordship to the *Hampshire Petition*, which not only prays for suffrage to this extent, but which also briefly states the grounds on which the prayer is founded, and points out the futility, as the petitioners deem it, of the objection with regard to its *impracticability*.

It is, my Lord, a well known maxim of the Constitution, that no man shall be *taxed without his own consent*. Every man is now *taxed;* therefore, if he has no voice in choosing those who make the tax-laws, he *must be taxed without his own consent*. But, this is not *all* that the law of the land says in support of our claim. The laws of England have always held, that every man not a *bondman* (and there are no bondmen now) ought to have *a voice in making*, or *assenting to*, the laws, either by himself or his representative in parliament. Sir THOMAS SMITH, who, as your Lordship need not be told, was a great lawyer and a Privy Councillor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in a work called "*The Commonwealth of England*," has this passage: "*Every* English-"man is intended to be present in par-"liament, either in person, or by "*procuration* and *attorney*, of what "pre-eminence, state, or quality so-"ever he may be, from the prince to "the *lowest person* in England, and "the consent of parliament is taken "to be *every man's* consent." This old lawyer, though he was a Privy Councillor to a Queen who had very *high* notions of her prerogatives, still called England a "*Commonwealth*," and talked not of *Monarchy* and *Legitimacy*, which words are become so fashionable now-a-days!

The *Book of the Assizes*, which, as your Lordship knows, is a book of great authority, says, that "Laws, "to *bind all*, must be *assented to by* "*all*." And how are *all* to assent to laws, if only a part, and that, too, a very small part, have a voice

in choosing those who have power to make the laws.

FORTESQUE, who wrote in the reign of Henry the Sixth, always talks of the parliament as the representatives of the *whole kingdom*, the *whole realm*, and the like; and never seems to suppose, that *any man* is excluded from voting.

BLACKSTONE, who was a *court-lawyer*, and in modern times too, could not blink this great principle without over-setting the whole of his Commentary. He says, in Book I. chap. 2. "*Every man* is, in judgment "of law, *party* to making an act of "parliament, being *present thereat*, "by his representatives." But, the grand principle, which is the clencher of all that any one has ever written on the subject, is in Book IV. chapter 1. "The *lawfulness* of punishing cri-"minals is founded upon this *prin-"ciple*, that the *law by which they "suffer* was made by *their own con-"sent*."

Now, my Lord, what *can* be urged in answer to this? How is it possible to explain away the meaning of these plain words? How is it possible to root out of men's minds principles like these, if once implanted there? And, is it just, my Lord, to call our principles *novel*, *wild* and *visionary*, and to accuse us of a wish to throw the country into confusion, because we inculcate these same principles? Are we "*designing and evil-minded* "*men*;" are we "*deluders* and *sedu-"cers*;" are the Reformers what an impudent man has called them, "*knaves*, or *fools*," because they have presumed to attach to plain and definitive words a plain and definitive meaning?

But, it is not the *law* of the proposition for *Universal Suffrage*, which your Lordship appears to dispute; it is the *practicability* of the thing; and, it would be unreasonable as well as rude in me to treat this objection of your Lordship lightly, seeing that I had such doubts of the *practicability* of it as to induce me, at a late meeting of Deputies in London, where Major Cartwright presided, to make a motion, proposing to stop at *house-holders*, and not to go so far as to embrace *every man of twenty-one years of age*, that being, as your Lordship knows, what is meant by the shorter phrase, "*Universal Suffrage*."

Upon the occasion here referred to, I stated all the difficulties, which, after long reflection, had occurred to my mind. I did not see how men who had no settled and visible dwelling in the safety of which they were interested, and which must be well known, could be polled with accuracy at an election, especially in populous places. I did not see how large crowds of men could be prevented from marching from one parish to another, and thereby voting twice or thrice in the same day, and for five or six different members. In short, I was lost in the mist of confusion which this scene presented to my mind, and I, therefore, proposed to stop at *householders*, really seeing in the other proposition, that "*universal impracticability*," which your Lordship appears to perceive.

Some persons in the Meeting agreed with me, but the majority were clearly on the other side, though my objections had, as I thought, not been removed. At last a very sensible and modest man, whose name I am sorry I have forgotten, and who came from *Middleton* in Lancashire, got up and gave an answer to my objections, in somewhat these words: "Sir, I can-"not see all, or any, of the diffi-"culties, which Mr. Cobbett believes "to exist in the way of taking an "election upon the principles of Uni-"versal Suffrage. I have seen with "how much exactness the lists of all "male inhabitants, in every parish, "*inmates* as well as *householders*, have "been made out under the *militia* "*laws*, and I see no reason why re-"gulations, which have been put in "force universally for calling us forth "to bear arms in defence of the "country and of the estates and pro-"perty of the country, should not

"be put in force again, and by the "very same officers, for calling us "forth to exercise our right of suff- "rage at elections."

This was enough for me. The thing had never struck me before. And, my Lord, what *difficulty* can there be in making out the lists of all men of twenty-one years of age, in every parish every year, two or three months before the day of election, and of having those lists ready to check the poll on the day of that election? It would be simply the *names* and the *age* that would be to be ascertained. Whereas, in the case of the *militia laws*, there are besides these two facts, the circumstances of marriage, of number of children, of parochial settlement, of previous service, of substitution, of pecuniary means, of height, of bodily ability, and other circumstances, all to be enquired into and ascertained. Yet all these are ascertained under the militia laws, and they become the foundation of proceedings affecting the personal liberty of every man, above eighteen and under fifty years of age. And, if all this could be done, and done so effectually too, shall it be pretended, that correct lists cannot be made out in each parish of *all the names* of *all the male inhabitants*, living in the parish on any given day? It would be even *easier* to do this than to take an election by *householders;* because, it would, in populous places, be very difficult to ascertain, who *were* and who *were not* householders. The man who really *rented* a house might not be the man who lived in it. Two or three, or more, families might live in the same house. The *fact* of residence would be accompanied with numerous others all of a doubtful or questionable character in many instances; and, then, it never could be endured, that a pauper householder should have a vote, while the independent single lodger should have none. Houses might be let for a month or a quarter. In short, the difficulties would be far greater than in the other case, the mode of ascertaining all the facts of which are so easily ascertained, being liable to no exception, except the single one of *under age*.

And, my Lord, what is so easy as to *take* an election with all the names of the voters ready prepared, and arranged in alphabetical order, and posted up beforehand at the Church doors? There could arise no disputes at the hustings. There could be no contests about good votes or bad votes. There would be nobody bribed, because no purse would suffice for the purpose. There would be none of those scenes of wickedness which now disgrace elections. The time of the members and of the House would not be wasted in the deciding on election contests. All would be fair, regular, and effectual, and the laws could not fail to be held in veneration, when every man should feel that he himself had had a voice in making them.

The *equity* of extending the suffrage to every grown-up man is, I think, equally clear. Every man *pays taxes*. I take the calculation of Mr. PRESTON, because I would avoid the charge of exaggeration. He states, in his pamphlet, that every labourer, who earns 18*l.* a year, pays 10*l.* of it in taxes. It is very certain, that every man pays a large portion of his wages away in taxes; and, as I never have heard it pretended, that the ancient law of the land did not make suffrage go hand in hand with taxation, it appears to me impossible to deny, that every man has, agreeably to that principle, a right to vote for Members of Parliament.

And, then, my Lord, there is the *military duty*. Every man, able to bear arms, has been made liable to serve as a *soldier;* to submit to martial law; to submit to military discipline; to leave his home, his parents, his wife, and, in some cases, his children; to quit his trade or calling; and, if it were necessary, to *risk his life*. These are not slight sacrifices, my Lord, and you well know to what an extent they have been made by the people of England, Ireland, and Scot-

land. And *for what* did they make these sacrifices? For the defence of their country and of the property in the country. Is it too much, then, to allow those who were called upon to make those great sacrifices to have a voice in choosing their representatives in Parliament? Is it *safe* to trust them with *arms* in their hands to defend the property of the country, and not *safe* to trust the sound of their *voices* in the choosing of those who are to make laws affecting their own lives?

Thus, then, my Lord, we have not only *law* but *reason* to offer your Lordship in support of what we pray for; and, is it not right to *answer* us, before abusing us as if we were *incendiaries* and almost *traitors*? Besides, it is nothing *new* that we propose. The same was proposed by the late Duke of Richmond nearly forty years ago. And, so serious and so much in earnest was he upon the subject, that he actually brought a bill into Parliament to make a Reform upon the principles of *Annual Elections* and *Universal Suffrage*, of which Bill the following were the TITLE and PREAMBLE:—

"A BILL ENTITULED,

"*AN ACT for declaring and restoring the natural, unalienable, and equal Right of ALL THE COMMONS of Great Britain (infants, persons of insane mind, and criminals incapacitated by law, only excepted) TO VOTE IN the Election of their Representatives in Parliament: For regulating the manner of such Elections: For restoring ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS: For giving an hereditary Seat to the Sixteen Peers, which shall be elected for Scotland: And for establishing more equitable Regulations concerning the Peerage of Scotland.*

PREAMBLE.

"WHEREAS the LIFE, LIBERTY, AND PROPERTY, of every man is or may be affected by the law of the land in which he lives, and every man is bound to pay obedience to the same.

"AND WHEREAS, by the constitution of this kingdom, the RIGHT OF MAKING laws is vested in three estates, of King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, and the consent of all *the* three said estates, comprehending the whole community, is necessary to make laws which bind the whole community.

"AND WHEREAS the House of Commons represents ALL THE COMMONS of the realm, and the consent of the House of Commons binds the consent of all the Commons of the realm, in all cases on which the legislature is competent to decide.

"AND WHEREAS NO MAN is, or can be actually *represented* who hath not a vote in the election of his Representative.

"AND WHEREAS it is the RIGHT of EVERY COMMONER of this realm (infants, persons of insane mind, and criminals incapacitated by law, only excepted) *to have a vote* in the election of the Representative who is to give his consent to the making of laws by which he is to be bound.

"AND WHEREAS the number of persons who are suffered *to vote* for electing the members of the House of Commons, do not at this time amount to *one sixth* part of the whole Commons of this realm, whereby far the greater part of the said Commons are deprived of their right to elect their Representatives; and the consent of the majority of the whole community to the passing of laws is given by persons whom they have not delegated for such purpose; and the majority of the said community are governed by laws made by a very small part of the said community and to which the said majority have not in fact consented by themselves, or by their Representatives.

"AND WHEREAS the state of election of members of the House of Commons hath, in process of time, so grossly deviated from its simple and natural principle of representation and equality, that in several places the members are returned by the property of *one man*; that the smallest Boroughs send as many members as the largest counties; and that a majority of the representatives of the whole nation are chosen by a number of voters not exceeding *twelve thousand*.

"NOW FOR REMEDY of such partial and unequal representation, and of the many mischiefs which have arisen therefrom; and for restoring, asserting, and maintaining the RIGHTS OF THE COMMONS of this realm, be it declared and enacted, and it is hereby declared and enacted, by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and

"consent of the Lords Spiritual and "Temporal, and Commons, in this pre-"sent Parliament assembled, and by "the authority of the same, *That every "Commoner of this realm* (excepting "only infants, persons of insane mind, "and criminals incapacitated by law), "*hath a natural, unalienable, and equal "right to vote in the election of his Re-"presentative in Parliament.*

"AND WHEREAS it was accorded by "statute of the fourth year of the Reign "of King Edward the Third, 'that a "Parliament should be holden every year "once, and more often, if need be; "which statute was confirmed by another "statute passed in the 36th year of the "reign of the said King Edward the "Third: and the practice in ancient "times was for writs to issue for the elec-"tion of a new Parliament every year.

"AND WHEREAS FREQUENT ELEC-"TIONS are indispensably necessary to "enable the Commons to alter and amend "the choice of their representatives as "they may see occasion; and such elec-"tions ought to be as frequent as may be "consistent with the use of a representa-"tive body; and the ancient practice of "annual elections is well calculated for "such purpose.

"AND WHEREAS *triennial* and *septen-"nial* Parliaments, by rendering the ex-"ercise of the right of election less fre-"quent, tend to make the Representa-"tives less dependant on their Constitu-"ents, than they always ought to be; and "also deprive the Commons for many "years after they come of age, of their "franchise of electing their own repre-"sentatives; Be it declared and enacted "by the authority aforesaid, *That the "ELECTION of members to serve in the "House of Commons ought to be AN-"NUAL.*"

Now, my Lord, the late Duke of Richmond was a man of great talent, wisdom, and of uncommon industry, attention, and knowledge of the customs, manners and dispositions of the people of this country. He had been a soldier, a minister, a member of parliament; he was a Lord Lieutenant of a county; as a magistrate and a country gentleman, as a patron of the industrious and a friend of the distressed; in all these capacities and qualities he was surpassed by very few men that ever lived. This nobleman, whose death was the death of his neighbourhood, co-operated with that very MAJOR CARTWRIGHT, of whom your Lordship has spoken so justly, and against whose spotless reputation so many vipers are sending forth their venom. This nobleman, what was *he?* Was he an "*evil-minded and designing "man?*" Was he a *deluder*, or was he one of the "*seduced?*" Was he one of those "*poor creatures*," as the insolent PERRY calls the *million* of Petitioners for annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage? The Duke of Richmond is of himself a *great authority* as to the *law* of the case, and what can be more full and clear than his Grace's Title and Preamble? Is it not, then, a little too much, my Lord, to treat all those, who now hold the same opinions, as being either "*poor, ignorant, deceived creatures*," or as "*designing and evil-minded "men*," who wish to stir up confusion and produce bloodshed? Did the Duke of Richmond wish to produce confusion and bloodshed? Did he desire to see *revolution* and *destruction?*

The Duke is himself a high authority? but, if your Lordship will be pleased to refer to the works of Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Baron Maseres, or to another work, lately published, by ALLMAN, Prince Street, Hanover Square, entitled, "*Common Consent, "the Basis of the Constitution of "England; or Parliamentary Reform "tried by the tests of Law and Rea-"son*," your Lordship will find it *proved*, that the right of *every freeman* (that is to say, every man not a bondman) to vote for Members of Parliament, and the right to *annual new parliaments*, are *birth-rights* of Englishmen, however contemptuously the idea may be treated by Mr. PERRY, under the title of Speeches of Mr. BROUGHAM. The publications, here alluded to, that is to say, publications put forth by Mr. PERRY, purporting to be speeches recently delivered by Mr. BROUGHAM, and levelled immediately at LORD COCHRANE, have contained more bitter attacks on the

Reformers than have come from any other quarter. This gentleman has been made to represent *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage* as the wildest of nonsense; as "*little* "*nostrums* and *big blunders*;" as mischievous in themselves, and as *mischievously intended:* as put forth by *bad men*, and sucked in by *foolish men*.

After this, my Lord, and after many direct personal attacks on Lord Cochrane, in the way above-mentioned, what has been the surprise in London, and what will it be all over the country, at hearing, that Mr. BROUGHAM himself, under his *own hand writing*, did most decidedly pledge himself to these very "*little nostrums* and *big blunders!*" But, let me clearly state to your Lordship the circumstances, under which this decided pledge was given.

About *five or six years ago*, Mr. BROUGHAM, in a paper which was printed, declared himself *hostile* to annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage. But, in the month of June, 1814, just at the time, when Lord Cochrane was expected to be expelled from the House of Commons, and, of course, when a *vacancy* for Westminster was expected to take place, there were certain individuals, who had formed the design of introducing Mr. BROUGHAM to fill his Lordship's place. But, there were other persons, who were resolved to oppose the attempt, unless Mr. BROUGHAM would explicitly declare for *annual parliaments* and for *suffrage co-extensive with taxation;* and, one gentleman in particular, Mr. PLACE, of Charing Cross, wrote to the friends of Mr. Brougham this determination. Immediately upon this, there was a Meeting of the Livery of London, to which Mr. BROUGHAM was invited. At that Meeting he made a speech, which speech he, two days afterwards, *wrote out in his own hand*, which so written out in his own hand, was kept by some persons of the Westminster Committee, as the pledge of his principles, and which speech, which I have seen in Mr. Brougham's own hand writing, was in the following words; to wit: "Mr. Brougham returned thanks, "and said that the last time he "had met the Livery, two years "ago, he had declined making pro- "fessions or promises, because he saw "them so often broken; but had de- "sired the Livery, if it were worth "their attention, *to mark his con- "duct*, and if it *betrayed his decla- "ration*, to punish him next time "they met by drinking to the memory "of his *departed principles*:—that "time was now come, and he met "them without any consciousness of "having forfeited their favour. These "two years had been pregnant with "important events; and infinitely "various as these were, they all "agreed in this, that they had migh- "tily redounded to the honour of "the cause, and the confirmation of "*our principles*. The fundamental "maxim of liberty had been so- "lemnly recognized in the face of the "world, that *all power is from the "people;* and that they have *a right "to choose their government, and dis- "miss their rulers for misconduct.* "They had done so in France, and it "was a lesson that could not be for- "gotten in the rest of Europe. The "saying, that 'laws are silent in the "midst of arms,' had failed for once; "and this fundamental principle had "triumphed over the triumphs of "the allied armies. So much for the "honour of the cause. But the "principles of Reform had been as- "sisted also in their progress. Where "is now the *Gag*, with which our "mouths had for five-and-twenty "years been stopped, as often as we "have required that Parliaments "should be *chosen yearly*, and that "the *elective franchise should be ex- "tended to all who pay taxes?* We "have been desired to wait, for the "enemy was at the gate, and ready to "avail himself of the discords attend- "ing our political contests, in order "to undermine our national indepen- "dence. This argument is gone, "and our adversaries must now look "for another.—He had mentioned the

" two radical doctrines of *Yearly* " *election*, and the franchise enjoyed " *by all paying taxes;* but it would " be superfluous to reason in favour " of them here, where *all were agreed* " *upon the subject.*—However, as else- " where they may speedily be dis- " cussed, he should take leave to sug- " gest a fact, for the use of such as " might have occasion to defend their " principles. It was one for the " truth of which he might appeal to " his honourable friend, the Member " for Middlesex (Mr. BYNG), who " knew as well as he did, that there " was a great improvement always ob- " servable in the conduct of the House " of Commons, towards the *last year* " *of a Parliament;* insomuch, that " he had heard it observed, that *more* " *good was done in that year*, than in " all the other *five or six*. The reason " of all this he should not presume to " state; but some persons were of so " suspicious a nature, as to insinuate, " that it might be the knowledge of " members, that at the end of that " session they must meet their consti- " tuents, such of them as had any, " and give an account of their trust. " He avowed that this fact had been " one of the chief grounds of his " conviction of the expediency of " *yearly elections;* and if any one " thought this *unsafe*, he should an- " swer, that such frequent recurrence " and such extension of the franchise " as should accompany it, is the *best* " *check upon profligate expense.* If " any other check was wanting, it " might be provided also. He had " talked of such Members as had con- " stituents, being reminded of it by " the manner in which the toast had " been given out by a mistake—he " hoped not an ominous one. It had " been said, ' a full, fair, and free re- " presentation in Parliament,'—leav- " out ' the People.' Now this is just " what is done *elsewhere*. There is " ' a full, fair, and free representation " in Parliament'—we need not drink " to that. There is a full represen- " tation of the *Aristocracy*—a fair " representation of the *Landed In-* " *terest*—a free representation—a free " ingress *of the Court*,—but not much " representation of the People—*they* " *are left out*, as they were to-day. " It *must* however, be otherwise *soon*. " While they bear the burdens of the " state, they *must*, as of *right*, share " in its government; and to effect *this* " *Reform* all *good men* must now unite. " He lamented the absence of his " friends now detained elsewhere; " but he knew they would come, the " moment their duty permitted. " Messrs. Whitbread, Brand, Creevey, " Bennet, Grattan, Lord Ossulston, " Lord A. Hamilton, he knew were " most anxious to join the meeting. " What they were now about he " could not precisely say; but he " guessed they were not supporting " the Court at that particular mo- " ment."

Strange, my Lord, is it not! And is it not a pity, that this gentleman should have been exhibited to the world by his friend, Mr. PERRY, as calling annual parliaments and universal suffrage " little nostrums and " big blunders?"

But, I have not yet finished the history of the Westminster Seat Scheme. That Scheme was put aside in 1814 by that sense of justice and that high sentiment, which led the people of Westminster to *re-elect Lord Cochrane*, though he had been expelled by the House of Commons, and the good effects of that re-election they and the whole country now feel. But, though frustrated for this time, the connection was carefully kept up with some persons in Westminster; and, at a meeting in Palace Yard, about a year ago, upon the subject of the Property Tax, a regular plan was laid, in concert with himself, for *introducing* Mr. Brougham to the people of that city. He was so introduced; but, it falling to the lot of Mr. HUNT to speak *before* the part of Mr. Brougham came to be performed, the former gentleman so prepared the way for the latter, that he thought it prudent to *withdraw*, and magnanimously to forego the sort of applause which

awaited his debut. Mr. Brougham, upon being afterwards reminded of this sudden retreat by Lord Castlereagh, said, that he did *not intend to speak* at the Meeting, he not being an inhabitant of Westminster. I have it not *under his own hand*, indeed, that he *did intend* to speak at the Meeting; but a gentleman, on whose word I can rely, assures me, that Mr. Brougham (though not an inhabitant of Westminster) did attend at a previous select meeting where the Resolutions were prepared, and that it was, at that meeting, settled that *he* should speak upon one of the resolutions.

Frightened away from his game here, the gentleman does not seem, however, to have wholly abandoned the chase; for, at a dinner, on the 23d of May last, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, at which dinner I was, the name of Mr. Brougham was inserted in the *List of Toasts* immediately after the names of the two members for the City. I, seeing this name so placed, and finding *Major Cartwright's* name at nearly the bottom of the list, intimated to the Stewards, that, unless Major Cartwright's name was placed *before* that of Mr. Brougham, I would *oppose the toast;* and this alteration *was made accordingly*. Nor did I stop here, for I read to the Company at dinner a paper, the purport of which was, that, if a vacancy in Westminster should happen, *Major Cartwright*, and *no other man*, ought to be the person to fill it, and *one* of the *objects* of which paper was well known to be, to guard the City against the schemes and intrigues, which had long been going on in favour of Mr. Brougham. At this dinner, and coming with views similar to my own, was Mr. HUNT; and, one of the Committee told that gentleman and me, that, though Mr. Brougham had, *by letter*, said that he would be at the dinner, he had left word, that, *if Mr.* HUNT *came*, information should be sent to him of it. We were also told, that such information had been sent to Mr. Brougham; and, in about half an hour afterwards, came an *apology* from Mr. Brougham, saying that he could not attend *on account of his duty in the House of Commons*, a motion of Sir Samuel Romilly's being just about to come on!

I will leave your Lordship to judge in what degree these transactions may have given rise to those bitter reproaches, which have been cast on the "*little nostrums* and *big blunders*" of the "*designing* and *evil-minded*" leaders of the "*poor, deluded, duped creatures of Reformers;*" and also in what degree these transactions may have tended to draw forth the imputations cast on the "*prompters*" and "*abettors*" of Lord Cochrane. But, I must beg your Lordship well to note the fact, that, *in May last*, Mr. Brougham's hopes as to Westminster were *completely destroyed;* and, I will leave your Lordship to judge if you can, as to the *precise time* when the mind of this gentleman *returned* to its *old state* of dislike to annual parliaments and universal suffrage.

Your Lordship knows, that the above-inserted manuscript speech of Mr. Brougham, was read in the House of Commons by Lord Cochrane on Monday last; and his Lordship did this, as he does every thing, in an open and manly manner, and also with great ability and effect. The *answer* of Mr. Brougham has been published by Mr. PERRY, in these words: "It had often been observed, and indeed with great justice, "that there was not perhaps *a more* "*painful and irksome situation*, than "that where a man was obliged to "*speak of himself*. In proportion to "that painful situation, and in compassion to it, the indulgence of the "House had always been extended, "and he hoped it would be so on the "present occasion [hear, hear! from "all sides of the House.] He trusted "it would not, however, be thought "that he was courting anxiously an "opportunity of going into detail, or "that on the contrary he wished to "avoid such details, for he felt it his "duty to say, that he expressed *his* "*warmest thanks* to the Noble Lord

" for the frank and open manner in " which he had afforded him the op- " portunity of going into the subject. " A more *groundless aspersion* had, " he believed, never been brought " forward against any individual. He " did not accuse the Noble Lord, " however, or those out of doors, who " had put *the brief* into his hands, " of uttering any *falsehood* in the " statement which had just been " submitted to the House, but he de- " cidedly accused them of *rashness* " and *imprudence*, and of not waiting " for only a few days longer, when " they would have had a full and fair " opportunity of hearing his opinions " on this most momentous and impor- " tant subject, and when they have " found whether he was or was not " inconsistent [hear, hear, hear!]. " Had those *out of doors*, whose *tool* " *the Noble Lord was*, but waited those " few days, they would then have " known what his real sentiments on " the question were, having, as the " House well knew, reserved to himself " the right of then speaking what he " felt on the subject [hear, hear!]. " How then could the Noble Lord, " how could they *in whose hands he* " *is*, presume to know what were the " opinions he (Mr. B.) had formed " on this most interesting question? " How do they know that he would " not have stated his opinion then in " the very terms which had just been " read? That they should have as- " certained his sentiments was a " moral impossibility [hear, hear!]. " But the Noble Lord had given a " mis-statement of what took place, " and he should now endeavour to " give the House the particulars of " the case. A dinner was given at " the London Tavern to the friends of " Parliamentary Reform, at which he " (Mr. B.) attended, with his friend " the Member for Middlesex, with " the late truly respected and much " lamented Member for the town of " Bedford (Mr. Whitbread,) with the " Member for Hertfordshire (Mr. " Brand,) and the Member for " Shrewsbury (Mr. Bennet.) In the " course of what passed there, some " observations fell from him *similar* " to what had been read by the Noble " Lord. The chief motive he had in " correcting what he had there stated, " was to prevent the possibility of his " words on this dangerous and yet im- " portant question being misrepre- " sented. He then said, *or at least* " *meant to be understood as saying*, " what he still maintained, that it was " consonant to the genius and spirit " of the Constitution, and expedient " in every sense of the word, that the " *power of election should be limited* " *to those who paid direct taxes*. He " corrected what he had said on the " subject, as he was aware of the mis- " takes of reporters. He again re- " peated, and wished it to be under- " stood, that what he then said, the " same he now maintained, viz. *that* " *the payment of direct taxes* ought to " be the limit of the elective franchise. " He did not wish to compete with the " Noble Lord, but this was his meaning " when he so spoke. He should wish " to say one word upon what had " been said respecting his advocating " the cause of a moderate and gradual " Reform. Six years ago it would be " remembered he had repeatedly said, " both within and without the House, " that it would be proper for those " who wished for *Annual Parlia-* " *ments to unite* with those who were " *more moderate*, and thus *secure a* " *footing*. There was no reason for " their stopping short, and he did not " hold it to be inconsistent in the " friends of Annual Parliaments to " unite with the more moderate Re- " formers, and to obtain, in the *first* " *instance a beginning*. This was " the opinion he then held, and he " had never deviated from it. The " Noble Lord was much mistaken " when he supposed that the mere " production of a speech delivered by " him (Mr. B.) at a Tavern, would " make him swerve from the line of " duty merely from the foolish and " childish desire of keeping up an ap- " pearance of consistency. If he sup- " posed him (Mr. B.) to do so, he was

"much mistaken. The House had "heard him declare his intention to "reserve his right of being heard, "when the question was brought fully "under the consideration of the "House, and he could only add, that "he would still reserve to himself that "right, uninfluenced by any thing the "Noble Lord had said. He again re-"peated, than when he spoke of the "extension of suffrage, it should be "to those who paid direct taxes only, "for he never *dreamt* of it going fur-"ther. As to the *miserable motives* "alleged to have actuated him, as if "he could prostitute himself at one "time to deliver opinions which were "not the sentiments of his heart, for "the purpose of being carried into the "House *on the shoulders of a rabble*, "[hear hear!] and at another time "to bend to prejudices he might have "to contend with in the House, all he "should say was, that he treated "such charges with *the contempt they* "*deserved.* The only pain he felt, "was when he contemplated the *folly* "and the *madness* of some *wild* theo-"rists, and the *base expedients* and "false practices they made use of to *di-*"*vide the people from the Constitution*, "merely to gratify party purposes "and to compass objects in which *the* "*good of the Country was neglected*, "while the *interests of one or two in-*"*dividuals was the all in all.* [Hear, "hear, hear!]. This gave him more "pain than all the noble Lord had "said or could say [hear!]."

There needs little comment. The calling of Lord Cochrane "*a tool*" in the hands of others; the calling the paper a "*groundless aspersion;*" the "*warmest thanks*" to his Lordship for bringing forward such aspersion; the "*contempt*" expressed at the imputation of the "*miserable motive*" for making the pledge; the *disdain* expressed at the idea of a desire to be "*carried to the House on the shoulders* "*of a* RABBLE," the assertion about the *folly* and *madness* of some *wild* theorists, who were making use of *base expedients* and *false practices* to divide the people from the Constitution for the mere *private interests* of *one* or *two* individuals: All these, my Lord, shall pass for what they are worth; and, I fancy, the full value of them will be found in the *pity* of a nation, naturally good-natured, and never prone to triumph over a fallen adversary.

But, as to the two great points; *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*, what explanation is here given? Why, as to the first, as to annual parliaments, *no explanation at all.* Indeed, it was utterly impossible. Ingenuity equal to that of Lord Peter in the Tale of a Tub could not have got rid of that point. And, what is *suffrage co-extensive with taxation;* what is that short of universal suffrage, when *every human creature in the country* pays heavy taxes? Oh! says Mr. Brougham, but I *meant* "direct taxes." *Meant!* Why did you not *say* so then? Meant! You meant what you *said*, to be sure; and so it was understood unquestionably. Besides, my Lord, be pleased to consider the *occasion* of writing this famous paper. It was the gentleman's *creed;* it was his political confession of faith. Lawyers are not apt to be careless in their use of words; they are not very much in the habit of leaving their meaning dubious from a desire to abbreviate. And, upon an occasion like the one here mentioned, was it likely that the gentleman would deliberately, after two days of reflection, put upon paper *that which he did not mean?* Yet it is not of the *change of opinion* though under such *peculiar circumstances*, that any reasonable man will find fault; it is, as Lord Cochrane truly said, the *attacks* on those who *now* entertain the same opinions; the charges of *wildness*, *madness*, *mischievousness*, of *evil designs* and *base motives*, preferred against those persons, and the abuse heaped upon them (in the Chronicle Speeches), under the name of Mr. Brougham, day after day. This was too much for flesh and blood to bear, and the noble Lord has resented it in a most able, manly and effectual manner. "A *few days.*" The gentlemen;

who held the pledge, were to wait *a few days*, 'till Mr. Brougham should declare his sentiments! *What* sentiments? He had declared, that those who had proposed *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*, were *deluders*, and those who listened to them were *deluded*; he had called these propositions, "*little* "*nostrums* and *big blunders*;" he had spoken of the promoters of the petitions as *wild, mad, mischievous* men. Was not *this* a pretty full declaration of his sentiments? What more were the holders of the pledge to wait for?

I am not sorry to perceive, however, that the learned gentleman received, in the hour of his altered tone, the kind condolence of his friends. Mr. BRAND is reported to have said, that "his learned friend had vindicated "—he ought rather to say he had *completely* "*repelled* the *uncalled* for and *undeserved* "attack that had been levelled at him."—Mr. LITTLETON went still further, as appears from the report; for he "not "only thought that his learned friend "had *completely vindicated* himself, but "said that he (Mr. Littleton) was quite "ready to *share* in any *odium* that might "attach to his honourable and learned friend "for his conduct on this important question." Upon which I can only say, my Lord, that I envy the gentleman his generosity rather than his taste.

Now, then, my Lord, what is the sum and substance of all that I have, to your great fatigue, I am afraid, submitted to the consideration of your Lordship? Why, it is this: that there are both *law* and *reason* on the side of *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*; that this plan of reform has actually been, within these forty years, brought before parliament, in the shape of a Bill, by one of the first peers of the realm; and that those who have been the most harsh in their censure of the present Reformers, were, a very little while ago, the most decided advocates for this very plan of reform.

We contend, that we are right. We *may*, nevertheless, be wrong; but we want fact and argument to convince us of our errors, and shall never be convinced by *abuse*. We shall never be convinced by the Sinecure Placemen, who write in the Quarterly Review, and who actually propose the silencing of us by *force*. In short, my Lord, they use these infamous words: "The press may combat the press in *ordinary* "times and upon *ordinary topics*; a *measure* "*of finance*, for instance, or the *common course* "of politics, or a point of *theology*. But, in "seasons of *great agitation*, on those *momen* "*tous subjects* in which the peace and security "of society, nay the very existence of social "order itself is involved, it is absurd to "suppose, that the healing will come from "the same weapon as the wound." Then, after saying that the people receive my Journal "with entire faith; that it serves "them for law and for gospel, for their creed "and their ten commandments; that they "talk by it and swear by it; and they are "ready to live by it, and to die by it." After this, these writers propose, that it should be *put down by force of law*, and they must mean *new law* too.

Can your Lordship form an idea of any thing more foul, more base than this? If the people do swear by my little book, they must, I hope, be in the right way; for never did any man more sedulously propagate precepts of peace, harmony, patience, fortitude, and obedience to the laws. I do feel proud, I must feel proud, at the wonderful extent of my writings; but I feel much more proud in the reflection, that those writings, without appealing to the low passions of men, but relying for success on the force of truth and reason, have greatly tended to enlighten the understandings of the people and thereby to prevent those violences which have always heretofore, in this country and in all other countries, been the inseparable companions of great national misery. Your Lordship has truly observed, that the conduct of the people is meritorious beyond all example. Indeed the spectacle of probably *four millions* of people having, at different places met in large bodies to petition on the subject of grievances, without a single riot or act of violence, is one of the most grand as well as most affecting that ever presented itself to the mind of man; and it is so honourable to our national character, that we must hate and abhor the wretch, who calls himself an Englishman, and who can see it without delight. Yet, these Sinecure Placemen of the Quarterly Review, would have an *imprimatur*, a prohibition, enacted against the writings, which above all others, have contributed towards the producing of this most admirable effect.

Your Lordship has heard enough about the Libellous Bill posted up against Mr. HUNT; you have read also of a placard, posted up to excite riot at the last Spafields Meeting, and, from the examinations before the Lord Mayor, you have seen that placard traced to its *source*. I could prove, that a posting bill against *me* was issued out, in the hands of five bill-stickers, from the Courier Office, to be stuck up in the *dead of night*, and that some of these people, having been taken into custody by the watch, were released by the Constable of the night upon their telling him *who were their employers*. What can your Lordship; what can any honourable man, think of these transactions?

Is it, my Lord, *inflammatory* matter that I have here been doing myself the honour of addressing to your Lordship? Yet of this very stamp have all my writings been for many years past. The subjects that I treat of, and of which to treat is my taste and my delight, are all of a nature to produce thinking, and to call forth the reasoning faculties of the mind. How much have we heard of plans, and how many hundreds of thousands of pounds have we seen expended, in order to *enlighten* the people! And, if this be really the object of the promoters of those plans, what praise is not due from them to

me, who am endeavouring to communicate to the people at large all that I have acquired from a life of application and experience; who am, in short endeavouring to take one head full of useful knowledge, and to clap it safe and sound upon every pair of shoulders in the kingdom?

"The race that write," are, my Lord, but too generally speaking, full of *envy*. The partiality of mothers for their children is a trifling weakness, compared to that of authors for their works; and, in both cases, the partiality is usually strong in proportion to the worthlessness of its object; because parental fondness steps forward as a compensation for the neglect or contempt or hatred of the world. But unhappy authors, not content with blindly doating on their own unsuccessful progeny, always endeavour to avenge their disappointment and shame on those of a different description. This is the case, at this moment, with the Quarterly Reviewers, and with many, many others. They would tear me to pieces for writing; they would tear the people to pieces for reading; they would chop off my hand, and pluck out the people's eyes: and this, or something very near to this, they or somebody else, must do, before I shall cease to write, or the people to read.

This very moment a Second Edition of the COURIER comes kindly to inform me, that the *Green Bag* has brought forth, amongst other things, a report relative to "the publication "of *inflammatory* and *seditious* works at a "CHEAP rate, the end and intention of "which is to root out all feelings of *religion* "and *morality*, and to excite a hatred and "contempt for the EXISTING STATE OF "THINGS." A, ah! Say you so! Well! But are there not plenty of *laws* already for the punishment of *seditious* writings, and also of *irreligious* and *immoral* writings? Oh, yes! *My work* cannot be meant, then! Yet there is that ugly word CHEAP! Why, in the name of goodness, dislike *cheap* publications? I thought that all the *kind*, all the *benevolent* all the *religious*, all the *moral*, all the *philanthropic*, all the good, dear Bible and Religious Tract Societies, were endeavouring by all the means in their power, to send forth CHEAP publications. What! It surely cannot be an objection to a publication, that it is CHEAP! How are the people to get at reading if they cannot have it CHEAP! These CHEAP publications do, it seems, according to the Courier's account of the Green Bag, tend to excite a hatred and contempt for the EXISTING STATE OF THINGS. This is a very large phrase. If it had said for the *King*, for the *Parliament*, for the *Lords*, for the *Church*, for the *Laws*, there would have been a clear meaning; but the *existing state of things* may mean Sinecures, Pensions, Grants, Standing Army, a certain mode of getting seats; it may mean the pauperism and misery that now overspread this formerly happy country. However, my Lord, if a Law were to be passed against CHEAP publications, I can assure your Lordship, that no *general classification* would hide the *real object*. All the people in England would understand most clearly what was meant. But, my Lord, *nothing short of a* TOTAL BREAKING UP OF THE PRESS could sever the people of England from my writings. If a law were passed to make my writings of *high price*, the people would *club their two-pences* to get at them, and they would value them the more, and seek them with more avidity, on account of what they could not but regard as a prohibition. Whether any attempt of the sort will be made is more than I can say; but, of one thing I am very sure, that nothing short of a direct *Imprimatur*; nothing short of a *Censorship*; that is to say, nothing short of the Government having the power to examine works *before* they be printed, and to *forbid their being printed if it chooses*; nothing short of this, will, can, or shall keep my writings from the eyes of my suffering countrymen. More than a MILLION of my little books have been sold within the last six months; and, though the people are tormented with the gnawings of starvation; though this is acknowledged and proclaimed in parliament as well as out, not one riot, not a single breach of the peace, has occurred at any of those numerous and multitudinous assemblages, where the principles of my little book have been held forth and acted on. Hundreds of Gentlemen are ready to attest, that it is their firm belief, that the exemplary patience and fortitude of the people and the consequent peace of the country are to be, in a great degree, ascribed to the influence of this little book; and, yet, in the face of all this———but, it is useless to talk: nothing short of an *Imprimatur* will, can, or shall keep my writings from the eyes of my suffering and faithful countrymen, who will, I have no doubt, in many places, send up *petitions* in time against any such measure.

In the full conviction, that your Lordship will hold in abhorrence all these attempts at foul play, and in the anxious hope, that you will do me the honour to lend your patient attention to what I have here written,

I am,

With the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. I intended to have offered some remarks upon the fine instances of the People's conduct at their public meetings in several parts of the kingdom, especially at *Worcester*, *Birmingham*, and *Carlisle*. But, want of room compels me to postpone these 'till my next, as well as the correction of an error as to the cause of the *disturbances* in *Wales*.

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TO THE

PEOPLE OF HAMPSHIRE.

On the Reports made to Parliament.—On the Habeas Corpus Suspension.—On the Sedition Bills and Treason Bills.—On the state to which we are reduced.

London, March 5, 1817.

MY GOOD NEIGHBOURS,

Yesterday the act passed the Royal Assent! It is now a *law*; and to this law we must now submit! For many, many years, I have been warning my country against the measures, which have finally brought us to this pass; and, those among you, who have been in the habit of attending the Meetings at Winchester, will remember how the greater part of the farmers and of all those who seemed to be in rather higher life than the rest used to scoff at me, when I foretold to you all what would be the end of the things which I used to complain of.—Those persons must *now* begin to feel some degree of alarm and shame; but this feeling comes too late.

I have no scruple to say, that this is the most important event that has taken place in the world for hundreds of years; because it changes, in the most important part, the state of this nation, which is, and long has been, of greater consequence than any other nation. The event itself being so awfully important, you, and every Englishman ought to know what has *produced it*. When our children's children shall read of this event, they will be all anxiety to know *what was the cause of it*; what was the cause of putting, for several months at the least, the *Personal Safety of every man*, however innocent he may be, within the *absolute power* of a Secretary of State, or of Six Privy Councillors.

This measure was proposed to the two Houses, in consequence of a *Report* to each House, made by a *Secret Committee* of each House, and these

Reports were made upon certain *evidence*, produced to those *Secret Committees*. The progress of the proceedings, in the House of Commons, for instance, was as follows :—

1. The Prince, in his speech, speaks of *designing* and *evil-minded* men, who are endeavouring to *seduce* the people into unlawful acts; and he expresses his confidence, that Parliament will cordially *co-operate* with him in suppressing this evil.
2. The Ministers bring, by the Prince's order, a *Bag*, containing a parcel of papers, which, they say, prove that there is a design to make a revolution and destroy the government; and, upon this, they moved for a *Secret Committee* to inquire into the contents of the *Bag*, and to make a Report to the whole House upon the subject, and to say *what ought* to be done in consequence of those contents.
3. The Committee was appointed in this way: It was to consist of *twenty-one members*. Each member of the House put 21 names upon a bit of paper, and then put that paper into a glass, or box. Then the whole of the papers are taken out, and the 21 men, whose names are upon the greatest number of bits of paper, are the Committee! So you see, that on whichever side the majority of the House is, that side must have the choosing of the Committee. This is called choosing by *ballot*; but, what people in general think about *ballot* is, that *the names of all the Members in the House are put into a glass*, or box, and then the first twenty-one, taken out *promiscuously*, like a *jury*, are the Committee. You see, that this is no such a thing; and, indeed, it was so well known *who* would be the members of the Committee, that Mr. Brougham actually read the 21 names to the House *before the papers were put into the box*.
4. This was the Committee, to whom the papers were referred. They assembled, looked at the contents of the Bag, which contents had been collected by the ministers.
5. They made a *Report*; that is to say, they drew up an account, founded on these papers, and laid it before the House. And, in both Houses of Parliament, the Report concludes with stating, that the *Laws, as they now stand, are not sufficient to preserve the peace* of the country.
6. The Ministers come and propose *new laws*; one to make it *death* to attempt to seduce either soldiers or sailors from their duty; another to make it *treason* to do certain acts relative to the endangering the person of the

Prince Regent; another to prevent public meetings unless under new regulations, and for checking the circulation of certain pamphlets, &c.; and another, which is the *all-in-all*, for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and, thereby, putting every man's *person* in the power of the Ministers, to enable them to shut it up *at their absolute pleasure*, without any limit whatever, except that the Act, as it now stands, is to last only till *July next;* but, this Act may be *renewed* before July next, and, that it *will* be renewed, who can doubt? For, can the country possibly be *more quiet then* than it is *now?*

After this brief history of the proceedings, which have more immediately led to the shocking state of things, it will only be necessary to insert the Reports themselves, in order to enable you to form a correct judgment as to the grounds of the laws that have been passed. These Reports are *immortal documents.*— They should be read by you all, and preserved as you would preserve your eye-sight. Read them over and over again; put them by and then take them out again. How you, my good neighbours, and all the people of England, will be surprised to find, that, upon these Reports of Committees formed as above described, and without *any evidence of any sort* submitted to *their own inspection*, the two Houses have, by vast majorities, proceeded to take away even our *personal safety*, and to make it possible for any man, however innocent, to be taken out of his bed and carried away to a prison, without any *hearing*, even before the Secretary of State who shall sign the warrant for his imprisonment.

In order to rouse the nation to make all the legal efforts in their power to obtain a repeal of this terrible law of *suspension*, the first thing is to make them *clearly* understand the grounds on which it has been passed; to make them see the *alleged* grounds, and to enable them to form an opinion as to the *real* grounds. When that is done, they will have the matter full in their minds; and they will see what it is that has produced the evil.

It is said, that the Habeas Corpus Act *has been suspended before*, so that this is *no new thing*. This, therefore, is a point of great moment. The Act has been suspended *before;* but under what circumstances? It was suspended in the reign of George I. when there was a Pretender to the Throne living in France, and supported by the king of France, and when there were many powerful men in England who were plotting with that Pretender to bring him over, and to put down the Family then upon the throne. Were these circumstances like those of the

present day? A French army was *then* in readiness to come over to assist that Pretender, and it was very well known, that many men, and men of weight too, were *ready to join that French army*. It was, therefore, necessary to give great powers to the government in order that they might, upon any sudden emergency, lay hold of any man suspected of a design to aid in such an enterprise; because, if suffered to remain at large, he might join the enemy and greatly add to the danger and the bloodshed. But does any such cause of fear exist *now*? We are at peace, and in close alliance, with all the kings of Europe; their subjects are all in a state of quiet submission; there is no Pretender; no man at home, who has any weight at all, proposes, or even hints at, any change in the established things of the country; there has been no attempt of any sort to effect Reform by violence; and, therefore, there is no sort of resemblance in the circumstances of the two cases.

In the reign of George II. the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; but then, not only was there a Pretender living in France and encouraged and supported by the king of France, but he actually landed in Scotland, was joined by large numbers and by several noblemen, marched towards London at the head of an army, and got as far as Carlisle. Under such circumstances it was the duty of the Parliament to empower the Ministers to seize and keep safe persons suspected of a design to join the enemy. But, to attempt to justify the suspension *now*, because a suspension took place *then*, would be like proposing to cut off a man's arm on account of a pin-scratch upon his finger, *because* a man's arm had once been cut off on account of a mortification of his hand.

The act was suspended during the first war against the French Revolutionists. But, at that time, we were at war with a very populous and powerful nation, who had destroyed their Church and Nobility, put their king to death, declared their country to be a Republic, and had offered their assistance to any other oppressed people to enable them to do the same in *their* country. This was denied to aim at England; but, at any rate, there was this *pretence*. Then it is certainly true, that delegates from Societies in England had gone to, and been received by the French Convention. This was another *pretence*. It is also certain, that, in many publications and speeches it was openly avowed, that it would be desirable to erect a Republic in England. Most men of liberal minds opposed most strenuously the suspension even *then*. Yet taking into view only the circumstance of *war*, and the *character of the enemy*; and supposing no Republican designs to have really existed; taking the

matter in this light, how *very different* are the two cases! Not only are we at *peace* now with all the world; but a war is almost impossible. Not only are the French *not republicans*, but they are become *Royalists*, after having tried Republicanism, and we are daily and hourly told, that they are happy under their return to a kingly government; and, so far from their king being our enemy, he is our *friend* and *ally*. Not only have we nothing from without to encourage any body here to think of a change in the form of government; but the very men, who, through the press, justify this suspension of our liberties and even our *Personal Safety*, tell us, in the same breath, that we live under a government, which is the *admiration* and *envy* of the world!

Therefore if I were to allow, which I do not, that the *suspension* was justifiable during the war against the French Republicans, I should for the very same reasons, amongst many others, deny that it was justifiable *now*. Thus then, the assertion, that the suspension is *not a new thing* is all sophistry; it is a base attempt to deceive the people, to blind them, to hush their well-grounded fears, and to reconcile them to a measure, which, if it remain any considerable time in force, must, as every one must see, be the cause of endless misery and degradation.

I am well aware, that there are people enough to say: "What is the "Suspension of the Habeas Corpus "Act *to me?* I am on the side of "the Ministers; or, *I never meddle* "*with politics.* I shall be as safe as "if the act had never passed. The "act will be a dead letter as far as "relates *to me.*" So it will, perhaps, as to *direct effect;* and it certainly will be so as far as relates to horses, oxen, mules, asses, hogs, dogs, cats, poultry, fish, posts, and stones; but, the man, who does not perceive, that this act will affect him indirectly, and who does not feel pain and shame at seeing it passed under the present circumstances, is, in the scale of animal life, far inferior in merit to a horse or a dog. The truth is, that every man, be he who or what he may, unless selfishness has made him a brute, does feel deep sorrow and shame upon this occasion; and, these miserable pretences of being contented under this state of things, and of not being affected by it, arise out of a desire to hide the pain and shame that they feel: to hide the feeling from their neighbours, and, if it were possible, from themselves; just as we always hear men endeavour to console themselves for the loss of things which they see no prospect of preserving or regaining; though the very same things had been but a little while before the pride and the happiness of their lives. This pretence however will become every day more *fashionable*. To af-

fect to despise the Personal Safety Law will be as much in fashion as it is amongst cast-off lovers to affect to despise their former sweet-hearts; and, in a very short time, if the suspension act be permitted to continue in force, we shall hear it applauded as a *lucky measure*, just as we did the stoppage of cash-payments at the Bank, which for a little while, was regarded as the most ruinous measure that ever was adopted, and which, *now*, it has proved to be, that measure being *the great cause* of all the present miseries, and even of these last fatal measures of restraint.—When that measure was first adopted, it was only for *six weeks;* then for *three months*; then for *a year!* then to the *end of the war;* then for the *first year of peace;* then for *one more year;* then for the *new war;* then for *a year* of peace; and now for *two years:* and thus it has already gone on for *twenty years!* And, if the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act be suffered to be renewed but *once;* if it be not repealed indeed almost immediately, what hope can any man of sense entertain, that it will *ever* be repealed? Can the Country ever be *more quiet* than it is now? Can it be *more prosperous* and less *miserable* as long as the funding system to its present extent shall last? Will commerce, manufactures, and agriculture revive under that load which has crushed them to pieces? *When*, then, if not *now*, is this act *ever* to be repealed? It has been passed in a time of *profound peace*; it cannot be denied that the patience of the people has been unparalleled; they have met in immense multitudes all over the kingdom to petition; they have been guilty of no outrages, no breaches of the peace; goaded and provoked in all sorts of ways, they have made no attacks on the persons or the property of the rich: and, if the act be called for *now*, when, I again ask, is it to cease? *When* is to come the time, when it will not be called for, and when there will not be found persons to justify its continuance?

Let no one, therefore, deceive himself with the expectation of a return from this path at *some future time*. The Petitions for a *repeal* must be sent up *now* or *never*. It will be a striking fact in history, that, on the very night that this Bill made its last appearance in the House of Commons, there lay upon the floor of that House, nearly *six hundred petitions* signed by *one million and sixty thousand men*, praying for *Parliamentary Reform*. They had been carried down in *Hackney Coaches*, and had been carried in by Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane; and when the two Masters in Chancery came in to announce that the Lords had finished the Bill, they were unable to approach the table, the whole space, of several

yards, from the Bar to the Table, being filled with this immense heap of Petitions! There had been petitions, with several *hundred thousand* names, presented before, and praying for the same thing; and Sir Francis Burdett, when the Bill came down from the Lords, emphatically observed, "That Bill is the answer to these Petitions;" an observation which History will not forget in recording the occurrences of these disgraceful times. I believe, that, in the whole, more than *one million and a half of men* have signed Petitions for Parliamentary Reform, upon the principles of *Annual Parliaments* and *Universal Suffrage*; and, this has been done in the most fair and open manner. In the 11 millions, or thereabouts, of the natives of England and Scotland, there cannot be more than about two millions of active, sturdy men. However, suppose the *families* to be *two millions and a half*, and that there be one *active man* to each family, a *majority* of the active men of the nation have petitioned upon this occasion, notwithstanding all the efforts that have been made to prevent petitioning. But, the truth is, that a considerable part of the petitions are not yet come in; and, if no measures of prevention, no menaces, no *undue* influence, had been made use of, there would, I am convinced, have been *nine tenths* of the names of *all the men in the country* to these petitions.

This, therefore, is THE PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE. Let our adversaries say or do what they will, this is the PEOPLE'S PRAYER; and, though Corruption may call it an attempt to overthrow the Constitution, this prayer, I am fully convinced, will be *finally* heard. I, for my part, as far as I have power, will always contend for this as our *right*. We have by reference to *law* and by an appeal to *reason*, proved it to be our right; and, we have received *no answer*.

It was my intention to enter here into a description of the *other Bills* that are now passing; but, I have not room in this Number, and it is absolutely necessary to publish the *Reports*, because we are now entering upon a *new sort of rule*, and the time will come when we shall have to refer to the sources from whence it has sprung. Keep this Number, I beg of you; for we shall *often have to speak of it*. In entering upon this new state of things, we ought first to trace the *causes of it*, and then to get at a clear notion of *what it is*. This we shall do in the course of the Next Number; and then we shall have to make all the legal exertions in our power to get rid of this deep disgrace on ourselves and our country.

I am your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

REPORT by the LORDS COMMITTEES appointed a Secret Committee to inquire into certain Meetings and Combinations endangering the Public Tranquillity, and to report to the House as they shall see Occasion.

Ordered to Report.

That the Committee have met, and have proceeded in the examination of the papers referred to them.

Their attention was in the first instance directed to those which relate to the metropolis; and they have found therein such evidence as leaves no doubt in their minds that a traitorous conspiracy has been formed in the metropolis for the purpose of overthrowing, by means of a general insurrection, the established Government, Laws, and Constitution of this Kingdom, and of effecting a general plunder and division of property.

In the last autumn various consultations were held by persons in the metropolis engaged in this conspiracy. Different measures of the most extensive and dangerous nature were resolved upon; partial preparations were made for their execution, and various plans were discussed for collecting a force sufficient for that purpose. But at a subsequent consultation another plan was adopted, which was, to get a great number of men together to see what force could be raised; and it was agreed that the best way to get them together would be to call a public meeting.—Spa Fields was fixed upon as the place affording the greatest facilities for entering the town, and attacking the most important points in the city. In pursuance of this design, and in order to assemble in the neighbourhood of London a great number of the poorer classes of the community, and particularly of those in whose minds the pressure of the times might be supposed to have excited disaffection and discontent, advertisements were inserted in newspapers, and handbills were industriously distributed, inviting the distressed manufacturers, mariners, artizans and others to assemble at that place on the 15th of November. A large body of people accordingly assembled at the time and place prescribed. The most inflammatory language was there held to the multitude, having a direct tendency to excite them to outrage and violence; and the meeting was in fact followed by some acts of plunder and riot. A petition to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent was agreed to at that meeting, and an adjournment to Palace Yard on the first day after the meeting of Parliament was proposed; but the second of December was subsequently fixed upon (on the proposition of one of the persons concerned in the plans already described) for another meeting in Spa Fields; and that day appears to have been determined upon for the execution of their design.

Various schemes were formed for this purpose; amongst them was a general and forcible liberation of all persons confined in the different prisons in the metropolis; into some of which, in order to facilitate its execution, an address to the prisoners was introduced, assuring them that their liberty would be restored under a new Government; announcing the intended attack upon all the prisons for that day; apprizing the prisoners that arms would be ready for them; exhorting them to be prepared with the national tri-colour cockade, and to co-operate by the most violent and sanguinary means to ensure success.

It was also proposed to set fire to various barracks, and steps were taken to ascertain and prepare the means of effecting this purpose. An attack upon the Tower and the Bank, and other points of importance, was, after previous consultations, finally determined upon. Pikes and arms to a certain extent were actually provided, and leaders were named, among whom the points of attack were distributed. It further appears that the interval between the two meetings was employed with un-

remitting assiduity by some of the most active agitators in taking regular circuits through different quarters of the town. In these they either resorted to the established clubs or societies, or laboured in conversations, apparently casual, at public houses, to work up the minds of those with whom they conversed into such a state of ferment and irritation as to render them, when collected in sufficient numbers, for whatever ostensible purpose, the fit and ready instruments for the execution of any project, however rash and desperate. In the course of these circuits one of their chief objects appears to have been to take every opportunity of attempting to seduce from their allegiance the soldiers of the different guard and at the Barracks. The principal persons concerned in this plan actually proceeded to Spa-Fields on the second of December, some of them with concealed arms, and with ammunition previously prepared; they had also provided themselves with tri-colour flags, and with a standard bearing the following inscription: "The brave Soldiers are our Brethers; treat them kindly;" and also with tri-colour cockades, evidently adopted as the signal of revolution. After much inflammatory language, a direct invitation was by one of these persons addressed to the multitude to proceed immediately to actual insurrection: and it appears quite certain, that the acts of plunder which were perpetrated for the purpose of procuring arms, and the other measures of open insurrection which followed, were not accidental or unpremeditated, but had been deliberately preconcerted, as parts of a general plan of rebellion and revolution. There appears also strong reason to believe that he execution of those projects at that parcular time was expected by some of the sociations in distant parts of the coun-. The conspirators seem to have had t fullest confidence of success; and a puasion has subsequently been expressmongst them, that their plans could been defeated only by casual and unexpected circumstances. Even after the failure of this attempt, the same plans appear not to have been abandoned.

Your Committee are deeply concerned to be compelled, in further execution of their duty, to report their full conviction that designs of this nature have not been confined to the capital, but have been extended and are still extending widely in many other parts of Great Britain, particularly in some of the most populous and manufacturing districts.

At the meeting of the 2d of December in Spa-fields, that part of the assembly which had not engaged in the acts of plunder and insurrection before mentioned, came to a resolution to adjourn the meeting to the second Monday after the Meeting of Parliament, namely, the 10th of February; and it appears by the papers referred to the Committee, that meetings in various parts of the country, conformably to a plan settled by the leading persons in London at an early period, were intended to be held on the same day.

It appears manifest that the persons engaged in various parts, both of England and Scotland, in forwarding the plans of Revolution, have constantly waited for the example of the metropolis. Intelligence of the event of the meeting there on the second of December was anxiously expected; and as the first report of the beginning of the disturbance excited in a high degree the spirits of the disaffected so its speedy suppression produced the expression of strong feelings of disappointment. Had it even partially succeeded, there seems much reason to believe that it would have been the signal for a more general rising in other parts of the kingdom. Since that time it appears to be the prevailing impression amongst the leading malcontents in the country, that it is expedient for them to wait till the whole kingdom shall (according to their expression) be more completely organized, and more ripe for action.

What is meant by completely organizing

the country is but too evident from the papers before the committee. It appears clearly that the object is, by means of societies or clubs, established or to be established in all parts of Great Britain under pretence of Parliamentary Reform, to infect the minds of all classes of the community, and particularly of those whose situation most exposes them to such impressions, with a spirit of discontent and disaffection, of insubordination, and contempt of all law, religion, and morality, and to hold out to them the plunder and division of all property, as the main object of their efforts, and the restoration of their natural rights; and no endeavours are omitted to prepare them to take up arms on the first signal for accomplishing these designs.

It is on these grounds that your Committee have been led to look with particular anxiety to the formation, principles, and conduct of those societies or clubs by which the ends of the disaffected have been hitherto so much forwarded, and are expected by them to be finally accomplished. Many of these societies pass under the denomination of Hampden Clubs. Under this title, societies of very various descriptions appear to have been formed, all professing their object to be Parliamentary Reform. This name and their professions may have induced many persons to become members of such societies who may not be aware of the ultimate intentions of many of their leaders; and the Committee would by no means ascribe to all these societies the same practices and designs which they have found to be but too prevalent amongst a large number of them; but they find that, particularly among the manufacturing and labouring classes, societies of this denomination have been most widely extended, and appear to have become some of the chief instruments of disseminating doctrines, and of preparing for the executing of plans, the most dangerous to the public security and peace.

Others of these Societies are called Union Clubs, professing the same object of Parliamentary Reform, but under these words understanding Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments—projects which evidently involve not any qualified or partial change, but a total subversion of the British Constitution. It appears that there is a London Union Society, and branch Unions corresponding with it, and affiliated to it. Others of these Societies have adopted the name of Spencean Philanthropists; and it was by members of a club of this description that the plans of the conspirators in London were discussed and prepared for execution.

The principles of these last associations seem to be spreading rapidly among the other Societies which have been formed, and are daily forming under that and other denominations in the country. Among the persons adopting these principles, it is common to disclaim Parliamentary Reform as unworthy of their attention. Their objects are avowed in a handbill dispersed by the Society of that description in London, and in numerous other publications. These objects are, "a parochial partnership in land, on the "principle that the land-holders are not "proprietors in chief; that they are but "the stewards of the public; that the "land is the people's farm; that landed "monopoly is contrary to the spirit of "Christianity, and destructive of the in-"dependence and morality of mankind."

The Societies under these different names are so numerous and so various, that it has been difficult to obtain a complete view of all of them, or to comprehend them under any general description.

The country Societies are principally to be found in and in the neighbourhood of Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Blackburne, Manchester, Birmingham, and Norwich, and in Glasgow and its vicinity; but they extend and are spreading, in some parts of the country, to almost every village. In addition to all the arts of seduction, resort is also had to a system of intimidation, and threats are held out to those who refuse to join. Their combinations are artfully contrived to secure secrecy in their proceedings, and to give to the leading members undisputed authority over the rest. Oaths of secrecy have been frequently administered, some of which are of the most atrocious and dreadful import.

They do not, however, trust to this security alone to prevent discovery; their proceedings are seldom reduced to writing; they pass and are communicated by word of mouth. The more numerous meetings delegate all authority to a managing committee; and by that committee, and by meetings of delegates from the committee of different societies, every thing of importance is transacted.

The committees themselves are so cautious of reducing any of their proceedings to writing, communicating with each other only by delegates and missionaries.

It appears that, in some parts of the country, arms have been lately procured by individual members of these societies in considerable quantities, which can only have been done with a view to the use of force. Subscriptions are also generally required, which although the amount paid by each individual may be very small, may produce, from the large numbers of the contributors, no inconsiderable fund.

The destructive objects which the leading members of these societies have in view are demonstrated by their publications and by their proceedings, all equally calculated to inflame the minds of the members, and in general of the poorer classes of the community. At the ordinary meetings of these societies, which are often continued to a late hour, their time is principally employed in listening to speeches tending to the destruction of social order, recommending a general equalization of property, and at the same time endeavouring to corrupt the morals of the hearers, and to destroy all reverence for religion. The land-holder has been represented as a monster which must be hunted down, and the fund-holder as a still greater evil; and both have been described as rapacious creatures, who take from the people fifteen pence out of every quartern loaf. They have been told that Parliamentary Reform is no more than a half measure, changing only one set of thieves for another; and that they must go to the land, as nothing short of that would avail them. Another principal employment of their time is to listen to publications of the same description as the speeches, containing the same doctrines, and leading to the same purposes; and the meetings are frequently terminated, particularly in London, by profane and seditious songs and parodies of parts of the liturgy, in which the responses are chaunted by the whole company. By such means, and by the profession of open infidelity in which some of the members indulge in their speeches, the minds of those who attend their meetings are tainted and depraved; they are taught contempt for all decency, all law, all religion and morality, and are thus prepared for the most atrocious scenes of outrage and violence.

Amongst the most effectual means of furthering these dangerous designs, the Committee think it their duty particularly to call the attention of the House to the unremitting activity which has been employed throughout the kingdom in circulating to an unprecedented extent, at the lowest prices or gratuitously, publications of the most seditious and inflammatory nature, marked with a peculiar character of irreligion and blasphemy, and tending not only to overturn the existing form of government and order of society, but to root out those principles upon which alone any government or any society can be supported.

The Committee cannot but consider the late attack upon His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, on his way from opening the present session of Parliament, as an additional and melancholy proof of the efficacy of this system to destroy all reverence for authority, and all sense of duty, and to expose to insult, indignity, and hazard the person of the immediate representative of the sovereign, even in the exercise of one of the most important parts of his royal functions.

It appears to be an essential part of the system to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by public meetings, convoked either by the leaders of these societies, or by others in the metropolis, and in populous places and districts, to address the multitude in terms of unprecedented licence and violence, amounting even in some instances to an open declaration that, in case of non-compliance with their petitions, the Sovereign will have forfeited his claim to their allegiance. These proceedings are subsequently printed and circulated, and thus become a fresh vehicle for sedition and treason.

By the frequency of these meetings and by the new practice of continuing them (under various pretexts) by frequent adjournments, the minds of his Majesty's well-disposed and peaceable subjects are held in a state of perpetual agitation and alarm. The appointment of such public meetings in a variety of different places on the same day, appears to be considered as the most effectual means of accomplishing the designs of the disaffected, and must evidently in a high degree embarrass and impede the exertions of all civil powers applicable to the suppression of disturbances, distract the attention of Government, and oblige them so to subdivide and harrass the military force which it may be necessary to call in for the assistance of the civil power, as to render it inadequate to the maintenance of public tranquillity.

Such a state of things cannot be suffered to continue without hazarding the most immiment and dreadful evils; and al-

though the Committee do not presume to anticipate the decision of Parliament, as to the particular measures to be adopted in the present emergency, they feel it to be their duty to express their decided opinion that further provisions are necessary for the preservation of the public peace, and for the protection of interests in which the happiness of every class of the community is deeply and equally involved.

REPORT of the COMMITTEE of SECRECY, to whom the several PAPERS, which were presented (sealed up) to the House, by Lord Viscount Castlereagh, on the 4th day of February, by Command of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, were referred, and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the same, as they should appear to them, to the House; have unanimously agreed to the following Report.

It appears to your Committee, from the most attentive consideration of the several documents referred to them, that attempts have been made, in various parts of the country, as well as in the metropolis, to take advantage of the distress in which the labouring and manufacturing classes of the community are at present involved, to induce them to look for *immediate* relief, not only in *a Reform of Parliament* on the plan of universal suffrage and annual election, but in a total overthrow of all existing establishments, and in a division of the landed, and extinction of the funded property of the country.

This hope and prospect of spoliation have been actively and industriously propagated by several Societies, openly existing in the metropolis, distinguished by the name of *Spenceans*: a title which, they have assumed in consequence of having revived the principles, with some variation, of a visionary writer of the name of *Spence*, which first appeared in a publication of his near twenty years ago.

It appears that at some of these Societies, held during the last month, the question was discussed, whether the meetings for Parliamentary Reform were calculated to mislead or enlighten the public. In the course of the debates upon which question, it was strongly urged "that Parliamentary Reform was only a "half measure; that they must look to the "land, for nothing short of that would "ever avail them: that we had no Con- "stitution, there being no book in which "it could be found, nor any man that "could tell what it was." In another discussion upon the question, "Whether the "practical establishment of *Spence's* Plan "be an effectual remedy for the present "distresses," one of the doctrines maintained was, that "the land-holder was a "monster to be hunted down; but that "they should not suffer themselves to be "amused; that there was a greater evil, "namely the fund-holder: that these "were the rapacious wretches that took "fifteen pence out of every quartern loaf.

It further appears, that in these meetings the most blasphemous expressions and doctrines are openly and repeatedly advanced; that as the meetings are professed to be of a convivial nature, the political debates and readings, are usually followed by songs, in many of which the most inflammatory topics are introduced, some of a seditious and treasonable nature, and others under the form of profane and indecent parodies of the Liturgy and of the holy Scriptures.

These Societies appear to have extended themselves; and there are traces of the existence of a Committee called *Conservative*, directing the operations of the whole. The doctrines above mentioned have been most systematically and industriously disseminated amongst mechanics and manufacturers, discharged soldiers and sailors, and labourers of all descriptions; they have been inculcated at frequent appointed meetings, and at various places, *by speakers*, who have made *the distresses of the times topics of excitement and inflammation:* and they have been circulated, with incredible activity and perseverance, in cheap and often gratuitous publications. It has been proved, to the entire satisfaction of your Committee, that some members of these Societies, acting by delegated or assumed authority, as an executive Committee of the whole, conceived the project, and endeavoured to prepare the means of raising an insurrection, so formidable from numbers, as by dint of physical strength to overpower all resistance.

The first step towards the accomplishment of this object was, by the individual exertion of the members of the Committee, to discover and *foment the prevalent distresses* and discontents in the metropolis and its vicinity. Returns were made of those who they thought were to be relied

upon for daring and hazardous enterprizes.

The design was by a sudden rising in the dead of the night, to surprise and overpower the soldiers in their different barracks, which were to be set on fire, at the same time (plans having been arranged, and some steps taken, with a view to the accomplishment of that object) to possess themselves of the artillery, to seize or destroy the bridges, and to take possession of the Tower and the Bank. In furtherance of this design, a machine was projected for clearing the streets of cavalry. A drawing of this machine, fully authenticated, and also a manuscript sketch or plan of various important parts of the Tower, found with the drawing of the machine, have been laid before your Committee.

This design was, however, relinquished a short time before its intended execution. It was thought more prudent previously to ascertain what force the Conspirators could actually call together, and this it was agreed could best be done by convening a public meeting, for the ostensible purpose of obtaining a redress of grievances in a legal way. The map of London was inspected, and Spa Fields were selected as the most eligible spot, from their vicinity to the Bank and the Tower. Advertisements were *accordingly prepared*, and written placards circulated, of the most dangerous and inflammatory nature; of one of which the following is a copy;

"BRITONS, TO ARMS!"

"The whole country waits the signal "from London to fly to Arms! Haste, "break open gunsmiths and other likely "places to find arms! Run all constables "who touch a man of us; no rise of "bread; no Regent; no Castlereagh: off "with their heads; no placemen, tythes, "or enclosures; no taxes; no bishops, "only useless lumber! Stand true, or be "slaves for ever."

"N. B. Five thousand of these bills are "up in the town, and printed ones, with "further particulars, will appear in due "time."

At this time, if not before, the intended insurrection assumed the symbols of the French Revolution; a Committee of Public Safety, consisting of 24, was agreed upon, including the names of several persons, extremely unlikely to lend themselves to such a cause. A tricolour flag and cockades were actually prepared; the flag was openly carried and displayed at the first meeting which took place in Spa Fields on the 15th of November. No acts of violence were, however, encouraged on that day, though some few instances of plunder occurred after the assembly dispersed, *but care was taken to adjourn the meeting to the 2d of December, by which time it was hoped that the preparations for insurrection would be fully matured.* Not a moment was lost in advertising the next meeting, and great assiduity was employed in circulating the intelligence through all the great manufacturing towns in the country, by *means of placards and hand-bills;* endeavours were used to raise subscriptions; the expense hitherto incurred in forwarding the object of the Conspiracy, and in supporting such inferior members of it as had relinquished their trades and occupations in order to devote their whole time to the furtherance of the cause, having been hitherto principally defrayed by one individual of the Committee. Plans for the seduction of the soldiers were now adopted and pursued with unremitting activity; appeals were made to excite their sympathy, and induce them not to act against the insurgents; attempts were made to inflame their hopes by promises of rank and reward, and to alarm their jealousy by the absurd fiction of the actual landing of a considerable foreign army, for the purpose of controling them.

The barracks were again reconnoitred with a view to attack. The manufacture of tricolour-ribbon was encouraged, with a view of rendering it familiar to the eyes of the public.

Visits were repeated to those quarters of the town, where the distress was considered as the most prevalent; and ware houses along the river, as well as shops in other places, which were known to contain arms, combustibles, and clothing, were examined and noted down, with the view of seizing those articles on the proper occasion. Plans were also formed for seducing the sailors on the river, by offers of advancement to high rank under the new government, and for seizing and equipping such ships as were accessible. Immediately previous to the day of meeting, arms were provided for the immediate use of some of the persons most actively engaged. This provision was deemed sufficient for the beginning of the insurrection, as they felt confident that if it should be successful for two hours, as many arms might be procured as would be necessary, from the depôts and gun-

smiths' shops, which had been reconnoitred with that view.

Your Committee have further received undoubted information that a large quantity of pike-heads had been ordered of one individual, and 250 actually made by him, and delivered and paid for. It was also undoubtedly intended to liberate the prisoners in the principal gaols in or about the Metropolis, in the hope of their concurrence and assistance in the intended insurrection. Addresses were introduced into some of those prisons, and recommended to be communicated to others, in which the persons confined were invited, in the name of the tri-coloured Committee, to rally round the tri-coloured standard, which would be erected on Monday, December the 2d, and to wear tri-coloured cockades themselves. It was promised that the prisoners should be liberated by force, and arms were stated to be provided for them, and they were directed to be ready to assist in overpowering the turnkeys. A waggon was hired for the business of the day, in which the flags and banner or standard, which had been previously prepared, together with some ammunition, were secretly conveyed *to the place of meeting*. From this waggon, before the *ostensible business* of the day commenced, in the other part of the field, the most inflammatory speeches were delivered, tending directly to excite insurrection, concluded by an appeal to the multitude assembled, whether they were prepared to redress their own grievances. A tri-coloured cockade was then exhibited, and the tri-coloured flag was displayed, and a number of persons followed it out of the field.

The direction which they took was towards that part of the town previously designed; gunsmiths' shops were broken open, addresses and offers were made to the soldiers at the Tower to induce them to open the gates; *but from the failure of the numbers expected to join the insurgents*, no attempt was made to force the gates. An attack was however made upon the City Magistrates assembled in the Royal Exchange, a shot fired, and a tri-colour flag and cockade openly displayed and seized on the offender.

In reviewing the whole of the transactions of the 2d of December, your Committee are firmly persuaded, that, however improbable the success of such a plan may appear, it yet was deliberately premeditated by desperate men, who calculated without reasonable ground upon defection of their opposers; and upon active support from those multitudes, whose distress they had witnessed, and *whom they had vainly instigated to revolt*. That consequently it was not merely the sudden ebullition of the moment, or the unauthorized attempt of any unconnected individual.

Your Committee are further convinced, that notwithstanding the failure on the 2d of December, the same designs still continue to be prosecuted with sanguine hopes of success.

Your Committee having thus stated the general result of the evidence which has been laid before them, respecting the state of the Metropolis, have now the no less painful duty of calling the attention of the House to what has been passing during the same period in different parts of the country, a subject of equally momentous consideration. The first thing which has here forced itself upon their observation, is the widely diffused ramification of a system of *Clubs*, associated professedly for the purpose of Parliamentary Reform, upon the most extended principle of *universal suffrage* and *annual parliaments*. These Clubs in general designate themselves by the same name of *Hampden Clubs*. On the professed objects of their institution, they appear to be *in communication and connection with the Club of that name in London*.

It appears to be part of the system of these Clubs, to promote an extension of clubs of the same name and nature, so widely, as, if possible, to include every village in the kingdom. The leading members are active in the circulation of *publications likely to promote their object*. Petitions, *ready prepared, have been sent down from the metropolis to all Societies in the country disposed to receive them*. The communication between these Clubs takes places by the mission of delegates; *delegates from these Clubs in the country; have assembled in London, and are expected to assemble again early in March*. Whatever may be the real object of these Clubs in general, your Committee have no hesitation in stating, from information on which they place full reliance, that in far the greater number of them, and particularly in those which are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, and which are composed of the lower order of artizans, *nothing*

short of a Revolution is the object expected and avowed.

Your Committee find, from equally undoubted information, that the doctrines of the *Spencean* Clubs have been widely diffused through the country, either by the extension of *similar societies*, or more frequently by the intervention of missionaries or *delegates*, whose business it is to propagate those doctrines throughout every society to which they have access. It is the universal practice of these Societies, to require from the members a small weekly subscription, which provides a fund for the expences of these missionaries, and also for the purchase of seditious tracts, which are read and commented on at their meetings. Some of these tracts, now before your Committee, inculcate in the most artful manner, the necessity of overturning what they call "*The Privileged Class*," as distinguished from the people, who are described as consisting of labourers, artizans, tradesmen, and every profession useful to society. A new order is declared to be the will of the people; rebellion is justified by the assertion that a nation cannot be a rebel; and all religion is disavowed, as well as loyalty, by the assertion, in answer to the question, "Would you live "without Gods or Kings"—"We abjure "tyranny of every kind?"

It seems, indeed, to be part of the system adopted *by these Societies*, to prepare the minds of the people for the destruction of the present frame of society, by undermining not only their habits of decent and regular subordination, but all the principles of morality and religion. Your Committee find, that there is scarcely any very numerous Society, in the parts above referred to, of whose proceedings they have obtained an account, in which some of the leading speakers do not openly avow the most seditious opinions, and do not excite their hearers to be prepared for actual insurrection. Topics for discussion are selected with this view: amongst others, the question, whether the Jacobin or the Loyalist was the best friend to his country? Even where petitioning is recommended, it is proposed to be connected in such a manner, by *an immense number of delegates attending in London at the same time*, in several parties, attached to each petition, as might induce an effort to obtain by force whatever they demanded. A *general idea seems prevalent* among those who compose these societies, that some fixed day, at no very great distance, is to be appointed for a *general rising*. They have been taught to look to the meetings in London as the signal for their operations, and have been in the habit of adjourning their own assemblies simultaneously to the same day; and it is a lamentable instance of the common interest which they feel, if not of the connection which is formed with those most implicated in the outrages committed in the metropolis, that about Manchester and some other places, the greatest exultation was manifested previous to the meeting in Spa-fields on the 2d of December; and the taking of the Tower and the ruin of the Bank were *publicly and confidently predicted*. The news of the result was impatiently expected, the roads were crowded during the night with a number of persons, many of them delegates from the different societies in the country, waiting for the arrival of the mail coach, and *the disappointment was not concealed, when it was ascertained that the riot had been quelled without much serious or extensive mischief*.

It appears, that the *confidence of the disaffected* is such, that they represent the numbers enrolled as amounting to several hundred thousand, and that their societies are daily increasing; that in their lists they distinguish by particular marks those among their subscribers who are able-bodied men, and ready to act when required; and that they also keep a list of those who refuse to join them in what they call a "Black Book," and threaten vengeance against these persons when the general insurrection shall take place. In some parts of one populous county, where nearly every village has already its Hampden Club, the members make it no secret that they consider themselves as of no other use than as being ready to act whenever they are called upon; on their admission they are said to be listed, and receive a secret card, with the words "Be Ready, Be Steady."

The habits and manners of these persons seem entirely changed; they already calculate upon the share of land which each is to possess, and point out the destruction of the churches, as the necessary consequence of their success. It appears that preparations are in progress, in several places, for providing arms; the demand upon gunsmiths, for every species of fire arms, has been beyond all former example; the intention is professed, of having recourse for a still larger supply to those towns where arms are manufactured, and where they are to be obtained at a very

low rate, from the general cheapness of labour at this time; or in case of necessity they are to be seized by force. The facility of converting implements of husbandry into offensive weapons, has been suggested; and persons have been sent to observe the state of particular places, where depôts of arms for the public service were supposed to have been formed.

Your Committee find, that a system of secret association has been extended to the manufacturing population of Glasgow, and some other populous towns of Scotland; and although these societies have availed themselves of *the same pretext, of Parliamentary Reform on the broadest basis,* your Committee are firmly persuaded, from the information which has been laid before them, that their ultimate object is the overthrow by force of the *existing form of government.* That the time for attempting this enterprize was to depend on the simultaneous rising of the *disaffected* in England; with some emissaries from whom occasional intercourse appears to have taken place, and that some provision of weapons has been made by this association.

Your Committee have now submitted to the House, what they conceive to be a fair, and *not exaggerated statement* of the result of their investigation. They have thought themselves precluded from inserting, in an appendix, the information from which it is drawn, by the consideration, that unless it were extremely partial and incomplete, they could not make it public without hazarding the personal safety of many useful and many respectable individuals, and in some instances without prejudicing the due administration of public justice.

On a review of the whole, it is a great satisfaction to your Committee to observe, that, notwithstanding the alarming progress which has been made in the system of extending disaffection and secret societies, its success has been confined to the principal manufacturing districts, where the distress is more prevalent, and numbers more easily collected; and that even in many of these districts, privations have been borne with exemplary patience and resignation, and the attempts of the disaffected have been disappointed; that few if any of the higher orders or even of the middle class of society, and scarcely any of the agricultural population have lent themselves *to the more violent of these projects.* Great allowance must be made for those who, under the pressure of urgent distress, have been led to listen to plausible and *confident demagogues, in the expectation of immediate relief.* It is to be hoped, that many of those who have engaged, to a certain extent, in the projects of the disaffected, but in whom the principles of moral and religious duty have not been extinguished or perverted by the most profane and miserable sophistry, would withdraw themselves before those projects were pushed to actual insurrection.

But, with all these allowances, your Committee cannot contemplate the activity and arts of the leaders in this conspiracy, and the numbers whom they have already seduced, and may seduce; the oaths by which many of them are bound together; the means suggested and prepared for the forcible attainment of their objects; the nature of the objects themselves, which are not only the overthrow of all the political institutions of the kingdom, but also such a subversion of the rights and principles of property, as must necessarily lead to general confusion, plunder, and bloodshed; without submitting, to the most serious attention of the House, the dangers which exist, and which the utmost vigilance of Government, *under the existing laws,* has been found inadequate to prevent.

10th February, 1817.

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

TO THE

GOOD AND TRUE

MEN OF HAMPSHIRE.

Meeting at Winchester.—Outrageous Parsons.—Dreadful Row.—Lockhart the Brave.—Challenge of Lockhart the Brave to Mr. Cobbett.—The Sinecure Crew's Flight.—Mr. Cobbett chaired.—No Address agreed to by the Meeting.—Cashman's Death.—Arrests in Lancashire.

London, 13th March, 1817.

MY WORTHY COUNTRYMEN,

The necessity of going into Hampshire will compel me to confine myself this week within very narrow limits; but, in my next I shall resume the discussion relative to the *famous Bills*, which have totally changed the situation of every man in this country, and shall endeavour to put the whole of that matter in so clear a light, that no human creature, who reads what I write, shall want any more information relative to it. In such a case, the main thing is, to give the great mass of the people a clear and true idea of what the things *are* which have been done; for, when that is once fixed in their minds, never, no, *never*, will it be *got out again*. There it will live as long as life shall animate the frame.

Few comparatively of you were at the Meeting, but you must all hear the story of *Lockhart the Brave*. However, this story must come in at its proper place of the proceedings of the tumultuous eleventh of March. You will bear in mind, that the Meeting was called by Mr. *Fleming* (late *Willis*) who is the HIGH SHERIFF, in consequence of a requisition signed by the Marquis of Winchester, who is Groom of the Stole, the Marquis of Buckingham, whose father was a Teller of the Exchequer, Old George Rose, who is every thing, Lord Palmerston, who is Secretary at War, Mr. Sturges Bourne, who is a Lord of the Treasury, Mr. Garnier, who is Apothecary General, Earl Malmsbury, who has a heavy pension, Lord Fitzharris, who is Governor of the Isle of Wight *for life*, and several other persons. There was a requisition sent to the Sheriff *before* the one here mentioned was sent to him; but, this other was carried to him by my son John a few days before he *was Sheriff*. My son wished to *leave* it with him. No. That was not approved of. It might be brought to him again the next *Monday;* but, when carried to him again, *another had been brought to him along with his patent of Sheriff!* Ours was therefore set aside, though it had been *tendered first;* and, when my son suggested, that *both might be inserted* in the call, as was done last year by poor talking BOSANQUET, the impartiality of Mr. FLEMING induced him to refuse to do it, though he very condescendingly offered to have our *names* put under the requisition of the Groom of the Stole, the Apothecary General, and Old George Rose, an honour, of which we had too much modesty to accept.

Upon this occasion every nerve appears to have been strained by the whole of the Nobility, Gentry and Clergy in the country, and upon my arrival in Winchester (from London) at ten o'clock in the morning, news assailed me from all quarters, that there was a plan resolved on for effectually preventing LORD COCHRANE and all those who might take part with him from *being heard;* and when the meeting was opened we soon discovered, that this plan was, if possible, to

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be carried into execution. There was good sense in it on the part of our adversaries; for, they were *sure* to be beaten, if we were heard, and they could only be beaten if we were not, and as to *shame*, you will soon see, that that formed no obstacle in their way.

When the High Sheriff had read the requisition and opened the Meeting, I offered myself to the Meeting with a paper in my hand. It was a copy of *our requisition*, and my object was merely to state, on that subject, what I have above stated to you. But, the Sheriff did not, and could not, know what it was. It might be *an address*; and, as I had the first word, it was his duty to let me proceed. He insisted that *I should not*; and that another address should be moved first by Sir Charles Ogle, a gentleman fixed upon, probably, for his inoffensive and amiable character. I insisted on my right, and now began a scene of uproar such as I never before witnessed. I besought the little dull Sheriff to let me only say ten words to explain the affair of the two requisitions. No. He was in hopes that I should not get a hearing. There we stood for half an hour. Noise on both sides so that not a word could be heard.

The people were assembled in the court-yard of the Castle, on one of the sides of which is the Grand Jury Chamber, having *four windows*, from which the speakers were to speak. The chamber was at once filled full, to the amount of, perhaps, a hundred persons, consisting chiefly of clergymen, custom-house people, barrack people, and the like, who, with sticks and umbrellas, and heels of shoes, and with shoutings, groanings, hissings, *spittings*, and other means of annoyance, endeavoured to stun and overwhelm us. However, all would not do. Our friends without returned the charge with interest, and nothing could be heard. At last came forward Sir Charles Ogle with the Address, *ready engrossed upon parchment*. I suppose he did read it, for, being at the next window, I saw *his lips move*; but, I am sure, that he himself did not hear the sound of his own voice, and I must do him the justice to say, that he appeared heartily ashamed of the part that he had been selected to act. Mr. Ashton Smith came forward to second that which nobody had heard read. He put his hand a little way out of the window, but, as if struck by the arrow that flyeth by day, he drew it in, under a shout of disapprobation enough to kill a gentleman dead upon the spot, when he reflected that it came from the lips of his own neighbours.

As yet the meeting knew nothing of what had been done. But, Lord Cochrane, who had obtained a *look* only at a copy of the Address now began to move another Address as an *amendment* to it; and, here it was that the mortification and rage of our opponents, particularly of those *within*, began to discover itself in symptoms bordering very closely on those of hydrophobia, or dog-madness. It was now most curious to observe the workings in the minds of different descriptions of the audience. A great number of the *tenants* had been pressed into the service of our opponents; some of their *tradesmen*; many *dock-yard* people and taxing people. In the minds of many of these, there was a real *inclination* on our side; and, in the minds of many more, *curiosity* was too powerful, for the moment, at least, for the sense of *obedience*. So that the Parsons and some few others finding the task of interruption devolving upon themselves, and having hardly any but their own voices, became shy; and *silence* was produced. His Lordship began by enquiring into the conduct of the little Sheriff in preferring the other requisition to that which his Lordship had signed, and stated, as a probable reason for the preference, that some of the persons, who had signed the former requisition, *had received out of the public money more*

than enough to pay all the poor-rates of Hampshire for ten years! His Lordship, after a variety of most excellent remarks, was proceeding to read his amendment, when the SHERIFF interrupted him by saying, that, as those subjects were not *proposed in the requisition*, they could not, and *should not*, be put to the Meeting. If the little man's ears have recovered the salute, which he received upon this, he is happy, at any rate, in his hearing faculties, though, to me, deafness would have been far preferable to the receiving of sounds more than sufficient to kill a man of any feeling.

The contest now was, whether Lord Cochrane should be allowed to propose his *amendment*. The Sheriff insisted that he should not, and a vast majority of the people insisted that he should. What the amendment was I could not precisely discover; for I was at the right hand window, the Sheriff at the second, and Lord Cochrane at the third. To get at his Lordship was impossible. About *twenty Parsons* had placed themselves at his back, and would suffer no one to approach him. I asked to be permitted to do so, and, upon observing to one of the Parsons in the rear rank of this true Church Militant, that I wanted to *speak* to his Lordship: "I know "you do," said he, "and *I want* "*that you shall not!*"

After this state of uproar had lasted for about half an hour, there was a *new actor* put forward. It was Mr. LOCKHART of the Honourable House. His name was announced. *Uncertainty* produced silence. A *lawyer*, *a Member of Parliament*, a *learned friend*. He would surely put us into the right path! He began by a declaration of his *impartiality*. He stated broadly, that nothing could be regularly proposed to the Meeting, which had not been announced in the requisition; and that, therefore, the Noble Lord had discovered "*gross ignorance*" of the mode of proceeding upon such occasions, when he introduced subjects, which had not been announced in the requisition, out of the limits of which we were not permitted to travel in the smallest degree. Mr. LOCKHART had begun his speech by observing, that he was sure he should not incur the displeasure of the Meeting, and that the only favour he had to beg of them was not to *interrupt* him by their *applauses*, a favour which was readily granted; for, no sooner was it perceived, that his object was to prevent Lord Cochrane from moving his amendment, than he became an actor in *dumb show*.

LORD COCHRANE had spoken, and had been heard too, 'till, with the noise at his back and all together, he appeared to be nearly exhausted; and, besides, my tongue really ached to be at this Learned Friend. *Curiosity* was now more powerful in consequence, partly, of my announcing my object to be to answer the Learned and Honourable Member. The silence was complete. I took Mr. Lockhart upon his own ground; said that I was willing to agree to the Address as far as it was strictly conformable to the requisition; and, even if I found, that it did depart from the gentleman's own rule, I would agree to it, provided, that its meaning were made clear, and that nothing amounting to downright nonsense was left in it. First, then, I begged to be furnished with the Requisition, which the Sheriff very sulkily handed down to me from his window, and which I read in the following words: "We, the undersigned Free-"holders of the County of Southamp-"ton, request you will fix an early "day for *a County Meeting*, to con-"sider of an Address to his Royal "Highness the Prince Regent, on the "outrageous and treasonable attack "made upon his Royal Highness on "his return from opening the Session "of Parliament." Then I obtained a copy of their Address, which confined itself to the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, instead of going to "*inhabitants in general*," which words, for the reasons which I stated, I proposed to introduce.

Next, to get rid of a small portion of *nonsense*, I proposed, that the Address should be "laid *before* His Royal High-"ness," instead of being laid "at his "Royal Highness's *feet*." Next, this address, which Mr. Lockhart had asserted to be strictly confined to the matters propounded in the Requisition, contained "a *pledge* to support the *Reli-*"*gion* and *Constitution* of the Coun-"try." For *Religion* I had no objection to substitute *Tythes*, if Mr. Lockhart would give his consent; but I said, from what I had *read*, that I, who was a true Churchman, was afraid he *would not!* This threw the Learned Friend into utter confusion, and even made the Parsons prick up their ears and dart a look at him from all quarters! The *Farmers* pricked up their ears too, and began to smirk and to look sideways slyly at the Parsons, bringing their chins down upon their cravats at the same time. The little Sheriff himself was at a loss what course to pursue. All was dead silence, while I, in a low, solemn and sort of prophetic tone, bade the parsons take warning, that, *before that day two years*, they would have cause to remember my words, and would see how foolish beyond all foolishness their conduct had been in opposing a reform of the parliament and in so rancourously pursuing its advocates. Lord Fitzharris is, in the Morning Chronicle, reported to have said, that *nothing could be heard* at the meeting. His Lordship could not have been there. Never was silence more complete; never was impression deeper. Mr. Lockhart was in vain invited to answer. Not a word had he to say; and an attempt which he had made to explain, that by *Religion* was meant *the Prince*, the Prince being the *Head of the Church*, was turned into such ridicule, and excited such bursts of laughter, even amongst our opponents, that the Learned Expositor seemed to be absolutely sinking through the floor. He skulked back from the window, and took shelter amongst the parsons, who seemed to avoid him, as the herd always shun a wounded or hunted deer.

But, Mr. Lockhart's mortification was not even yet at its height; for, if the word *Religion* meant the *Prince*, *Constitution*, which we were also to pledge ourselves to support, could not mean the same thing, and besides, the Learned Expositor had said, that by *Constitution* were meant *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*. Here, then, the address had travelled out of the Requisition, or the Learned Expositor had been wrong in his exposition; and, I had to leave it to the Meeting to decide, who had discovered the "*grossest* "*ignorance*," the Learned Member or the Noble Lord. This, however, being so loose a phrase as to admit of so many interruptions, I proposed to amend the Address by inserting, after the word *Constitution*, "as established "*by Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights*, "*and the Act of Habeas Corpus, for* "*which our forefathers fought and* "*bled*," with which amendment I was willing for the Address to pass unanimously.

There was something so moderate, so reasonable, so manifestly just and proper in this, that our opponents could not for very shame object to it. Mr. Lockhart was called upon by the whole Meeting to come forward. He had the merit, though a lawyer, of discovering some degree of reluctance to oppose a thing so manifestly right. But after taking time to rally his spirits, he put his head forth, and said: "Gentlemen, if "you adopt Mr. Cobbett's amend-"ments, you will declare *against* "*loyalty*, and for every thing that is "*seditious and wicked*." Upon which, I said, "*Now*, Gentlemen, I am "happy to say, that however we may "have been misled by our passions "this day to express our differences "in so violent a manner, upon one "point, I am sure we shall be per-"fectly unanimous, and that is, that "Mr. Lockhart has been guilty of the "*foulest misrepresentation* that ever "was made by mortal man." Where-

upon one big parson, under the window, exclaimed, "not half *foul* "*enough;*" but with that single exception, such a roar of indignation as was then uttered against the Learned Friend as I never before heard in my life; and most assuredly he merited it, as you will clearly see by looking at the words by which I had proposed to amend the address, and which words I had wrote down upon paper in the presence of witnesses, which words I repeatedly read from the paper, and from which paper I have copied the words now. This shout of indignation produced the *challenge* from Lockhart the Brave, of which I shall speak by and by.

Mr. HUNT seconded the Amendments, and was heard very well for about half an hour. Great impatience was now testified by our opponents to *put an end* to the Meeting. "Pray, Mr. Sheriff, *dissolve;* pray, Mr. Sheriff, *adjourn;*" resounded from the quarters of the Parsons and Customhouse and Dockyard people; but, all at once, from the *fourth window*, out bolted Mr. *Henry Marsh*, who, in a speech of half an hour's duration, and, as I was told (for he was too far off for me to hear) replete with *wit* and *humour* of the best sort, turned the conduct of our opponents and the matter of their illiterate and slovenly address into such ridicule, that scarcely a man could refrain from laughing in the most immoderate manner.—The Sheriff strained his throat in vain to call Mr. *Marsh* to order; the latter put it to the vote, whether he should be heard or not; the Meeting decided that he should, and on he went amidst an uproar of laughter as loud as the shoutings and groanings which saluted the ears of the Sheriff and his Back, Mr. Lockhart, whenever they attempted to interfere. The Parsons and Tax-eaters cried out, "Treason, "take him up. He turns the attack on "the Prince into ridicule. Hear him! "hear him! Go on! go on! O, Lord!" And then such laughter as never, I verily believe, was heard before in the world. Some of the farmers and tradesmen and labouring people I could see putting their hands to their sides, and laughing till they were ready to tumble down. The women, and girls, of whom the number was not small, were convulsed with laughter, 'till at last, it was more like screaming than laughing.

It was nearly five o'clock, the Meeting having began precisely at twelve. The Sheriff now saw, that his power was of no avail, and that, unless something was speedily done for the poor address, it could not have even the *semblance* of being agreed to. He, therefore, poked out his head to put the address. We called for the *amendments* to be put, as all the world knows they ought to have been. He and Mr. Lockhart refused! They would *not put* the amendments. Not a word was heard, except by us uow stood near the little gentleman. The uproar was renewed. But, having carried our point; having got a hearing, and given a most famous lashing to our opponents, we waved our hats to our friends and produced a division. The Sheriff decided that the address was carried *three* or *four* to *one;* and I am most sincerely persuaded, *that the majority was on our side.*

LORD COCHRANE, who, though standing within one window of the SHERIFF had got at no knowledge as to *the subject of the division.* His Lordship concluded, of course, that my amendments had been put, and, as the people in the room said "Cob-"bett is *beaten*," his Lordship then began to move *his amendment*, which was to set aside the address altogether. But, behold, while he was speaking with this object in view, the SHERIFF *packed off*, followed by the Parsons and Tax-eaters, who ran down the Street amidst hisses, groans, and every mark of popular contempt and indignation! And Lord Cochrane was *actually speaking*, when the Under Sheriff came, and told us, that, if we did not *disperse*, he was *ordered to*

take us into custody! And yet, the Morning Chronicle makes Lord Fitzharris say, in his place in parliament, that *an unanimous vote of thanks was given to the Sheriff!* No: nor would any one have been heard for a moment upon such a subject. There was no vote directing *who* should *present* the address. It was *no address at all.* It was never *heard read* from first to last. Indeed Lord Fitzharris is made to say, that *nothing was heard.* How, then, could the address be *the address of the Meeting?* The *thanks* to the Sheriff and the order for *presenting* the address, was, I suppose, voted at the *Inn* after dinner; but, at the *Meeting* neither was ever so much as *heard talk of.*

The proceedings closed as I have stated. The Winchester correspondent of the COURIER, who tells all sorts of falsehoods, concludes thus:— "N.B. I forgot to tell you, that when "Mr. Cobbett left the Castle, *a few* "*men* proposed that they should *bor-* "*row* a chair to carry him on their "shoulders to the inn in the city; he "*actually waited* till they *procured* "*one*, and *suffered himself* to be carried "in an *old arm chair* to the Black "Swan amidst the hisses and groans "of the Freeholders."—Yes, he had *forgot* to mention this in his letter! He would have *forgotten* it in the postcript too; but he was afraid, that somebody else might *remember* it. Whether it was a *few* men or *many* men, whether it was in a *borrowed* chair or a *bought* chair; whether the chair were *old* or *new*; still the reader will perceive, that *nothing* of this sort was done for our *opponents.* The truth is, that I was not at all apprized of the matter; that an immense crowd surrounded me to shake hands with me, and the kind and honest hearts of the owners of those hands it would comfort me to think that I had with me, if I were thrown down to the bottom of a dungeon. I could not get along for the crowd. All at once a chair was brought, into which I very cheerfully got, and, when I alighted from it I said: "My kind and honest "countrymen, I am proud of the "honour you have done me for my "own sake; but, I am much more "proud of it as I deem it a strong "mark of your unshaken attachment "to those undoubted and unalienable "rights to which I have endeavoured "to convince you that you are enti-"tled, and which, whatever becomes "of me, I trust nothing will ever in-"duce you to abandon. Be assured, "that while my mind retains its facul-"ties, and limbs enjoy that liberty "which innocence ought to ensure to "every man, I never will cease to "maintain our cause to the utmost of "my power."

While this was going on, while all was joy and exultation in our breasts, very different were the feelings of *Lockhart the Brave.* He had come to me in the Grand Jury Chamber soon after I had charged him so justly with "*foul* misrepresentation." He said, he had not been accustomed to receive language like that. I told him to come to me after the Meeting was over. As we were going out of the Chamber, he came again. The thing would admit of *no delay.* I told him to come to the Inn. He did so, with *two men as witnesses.* I then told him, that I would have no communication with him, except it was in *writing.* They wanted to sit down in the room, where Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Hunt, and other gentlemen were with me; but this I told them that I would not suffer; and bade them go out of the room. They did so; and then a correspondence took place, which I insert here word for word and letter for letter, and, if the Learned Friend should feel sore at seeing his *agitation* exposed in his illiterate notes, let him thank his own folly and impudence for the exposure.

Sir—

as you requested me to put in writing the object of my requesting a meeting with you, I beg to inform you it was with a view to your retracting the word *foul* which you applied to me, by stating I had

been guilty of a foul misrepresentation" I did not hear whether you said "of your language or intentions—I am Sir your obedient Servant— J J Lockhart

Winchester, 11th March, 1817.

Sir,

I did not say that it was "a *foul* "misrepresentation," which you had made, but "the *foulest* misrepresentation that ever "was made by mortal man," an opinion which I still entertain, and always shall, until you shall fully express your sorrow for the effects of that mortification, which, I hope, led your tongue beyond the cool dictates of your mind.

I am, Sir,
Your most humble
And most obedient Servant,
WM. COBBETT.

Sir—

I have received your answer which leaves no alternative except that of my insisting on that satisfaction which you owe me as a Gentleman, and which I wish you would empower some friend to arrange this evening.

I am Sir your obedient Servant
J J Lockhart
March 11, 1817—

I shall remain in Winchester this evening for this purpose until 8 o clock and a friend will deliver this Letter to you, to accept your arrangement—

To Wm. Cobbett, Esq.—

Winchester, 11th March, 1817.

Sir,

If I could stay here another day, I would amuse myself with some fun with you, but having business of more importance on hand, I must beg of you to renew your pleasant correspondence, upon our arrival in town. In the meanwhile I remain,

Your most obedient,
And most humble Servant,
WM. COBBETT.

Now, my good neighbours, a few plain facts will enable you to form a perfectly correct judgment of this man's conduct and character.—FIRST, he knew, that I had written many essays reprobating, in the strongest terms, *the practice* of duelling.—SECOND, he knew, that I had held it as a species of suicide for a man, in my situation, to fight a duel, seeing, that, if one *missed* me, another would be found, 'till some one should *hit* me.—THIRD (and *this* was his rock of safety) he knew well, that if I *accepted of his challenge*, I must instantly forfeit *five thousand pounds sterling*. He knew this well, for he, who is a *Lawyer*, mind, knew that I had been bound in recognizes for *seven* years from the year 1812.—*This* was his *safeguard!* You often hear of people, who are going to fight duels, taken before magistrates and *bound over*. That puts an end to the affair. But, he knew, and *well knew*, that I was *bound over before hand*, and in a monstrous and ruinous sum; and, when you are told, that he brought *two witnesses with him*, you will easily guess what were his *real* intentions.—When men *mean to fight*, they go to work in a very different way. They send a *single* friend to tell the party of it in a *whisper*. They do not go to the party and take *two witnesses* with them. They do not run blustering about and making a noise; and, my real belief is, that, if I had done any thing, which would have amounted to a breach of the peace; if I had accepted of a challenge, and had appointed a time to fight, Lockhart the Brave would have taken care to have us both bound over, and would have also taken care, that this breach of the peace should have cost me five thousand pounds! This is my belief; but you have the facts before you, and I leave you to judge for yourselves.

It was my intention to offer you some remarks on the *Death of Cashman* and on the *Arrests in Lancashire*; but, I shall be very late as it is, and must now conclude with expressing to you my unalterable attachment and respect.

WM. COBBETT.

CASHMAN.

The death of this sailor is a matter of such interest, that I cannot refrain from inserting here the account of it as published in the COURIER newspaper. I shall reserve *remarks* for another opportunity.—In order, however, that several passages in the account may be the better understood, I will first insert the words of his

defence at the Old Bailey after his trial and before sentence was passed on him, which defence was in the following words:—"My Lord,—I "hope you will excuse a poor friend-"less sailor for occupying your time. "Had I died fighting the battles of "my country I should have gloried "in it; but I confess that it grieves "me to think of suffering like a rob-"ber, when I call God to witness that "*I have passed days together without* "*even a morsel of bread rather than* "*violate the laws.* I have served my "King for many years, and often "fought for my country. I have re-"ceived *nine wounds in the service*, "and never before have been charged "with any offence. I have been at "sea *all my life*, and my *Father was* "*killed on board the Diana frigate.* "I came to London, my Lord, *to en-*"*deavour to recover my pay and* "*prize-money*, but being *unsuccessful*, "I was reduced to the greatest dis-"tress, and being poor and penny-"less, I have not been able to bring "forward witnesses to prove my in-"nocence, nor even to acquaint my "brave officers, or I am sure they "would all have come forward in my "behalf. The gentlemen who have "sworn against me must have mistook "me for some other person (there "being *many sailors in the mob;*) but "I freely forgive them, and I hope "God will also forgive them, for I "solemnly declare that I committed "no act of violence whatever."

The following is the account from the COURIER of Wednesday last.

The Recorder of London, having, on Saturday last made a report to the Prince Regent in Council, of the cases of some of the persons under sentence of death in Newgate, and among others of the case of John Cashman, who was convicted at the January Old Bailey Sessions of having taken a most active part in the attack and plunder of Mr. Beckwith's house in Skinner-street, on the memorable 2d of December; after due deliberation, it was considered imperative, however painful the duty, to consign this unfortunate man to the fate apportioned by law to his offence. This morning was fixed for his execution, and in order that it might produce a more lasting impression on the minds of those unhappy persons, who like himself, had been made the instruments of mere mischievous characters, it was determined that his life should be sacrificed immediately contiguous to the spot which had formed the scene of his daring exploits, namely, in front of Mr. Beckwith's shop.—After the religious services of the morning were over, he was visited by several of his friends, to whom he spoke in an unconcerned manner.—Among others who called to offer him consolation, was an Irish gentleman, named Upton, who had been on a former occasion the landlord of his father. To this gentleman Cashman spoke unreservedly of his affairs—he said *he was entitled to 200l. wages and prize money*, about the disposition of which he was very anxious. Mr. Upton, in order to gratify his feelings, prepared, under his directions, a will, by which he disposed of his property in various ways; he mainly left it, however, *to purchase a boat for a brother of his*, who had been a fisherman on the coast of Ireland; to his mother, and for the *payment of his debts, about which he appeared particularly solicitous.* This will he signed, and Mr. Upton promised to do all in his power to see it executed.—In his cell his companions were, an Irishman, named Quinland, convicted of a burglary, but respited; and a person, named Dowding, sentenced to two years' imprisonment, both of the Roman Catholic persuasion. To these persons he spoke freely of his situation, but seemed to regard death with perfect indifference. With respect to the offence imputed to him, he admitted that he had been in Mr. Beckwith's shop; and in alluding to the attack on that occasion, remarked that Mrs. Beckwith, or some lady on the stairs, called on the mob to spare their lives. He denied that he was at all privy to the firing of

the pistol at Mr. Platt, or was aware of that circumstance, but admitted that he had assisted in rescuing young Watson from the constable. *He said he had been down to the Admiralty on the morning of the riots* with a letter, and in his way back was met by a brother sailor, a warrant officer, whose name he declined mentioning; but who had been often after him before on the subject, and by whom he was persuaded to go to Spa-fields. In their way there, he partook of a considerable quantity of rum, gin, and beer, and *having had but little food for two days before*, it had a great effect upon him. He saw the colours pulled down by the officers at the top of Coppice-row, and went to resist the attempt, but in vain. He also repeated his story of having struck a fellow who was doing some wanton mischief in the Poultry. Such was the amount of his admissions; but he was *by no means inclined to acknowledge the justice of his sentence.* It was stated by himself, both on his trial and since his conviction, that he had fought bravely on various occasions in the course of his service in the Navy, and that he had received several wounds, particularly on his head. To this it is stated, some of his officers have borne testimony; but these gentlemen, WITH BECOMING PRUDENCE, declined interfering in the fate of a man, who, *however praisworthy before*, by his late actions had sacrificed all claims to *their respect.*—Among other topics which agitated his mind was the apprehension of being drawn to the scaffold in a cart. —He said "he did not like to be "taken like a *vagrant* through the "streets: if he had been a *felon* or "a *murderer* he should not mind it, "but when he was neither he thought "it was too bad." Mr. Cotton *kindly promised him*, with a view to calm his feelings, that he would get him *removed in a coach.*—While the hour for closing the existence of the criminal was thus drawing on, directions were given to the City carpenter to make preparations for the awful spectacle; and, accordingly, posts and rails were prepared at the end of the avenues leading to the place of execution, so as to prevent, at the appointed time, the approach of carriages of any sort. These preparations naturally excited curiosity, and immense crowds assembled round the workmen, and in front of Mr. Beckwith's shop.—This latter place formed a principal object of attraction, and such was the amount of the mob at one time, and the riotous character of its proceedings, that Mr. Beckwith was under the necessity of soliciting from the Lord Mayor a guard of constables, which was immediately granted. The crowd, however, continued till long after the day had closed, and expressions were used which led to very considerable alarms lest an attempt should be made to rescue the prisoner.—Mr. Beckwith naturally felt desirous to remove the scene of death from his own door, and twice went to the Secretary of State's Office for the purpose of soliciting Lord Sidmouth on the subject. His answer was, however, that the orders already issued would not be altered. Mr. Alderman Bridges, who went on a similar errand, received the like answer. The Lord Mayor took the requisite precautions to prevent disturbance; he issued precepts to all the usual Officers of the City, calling upon them to attend in Skinner-street at an early hour this morning, and sent similar instructions to the Deputies of the different Wards to call out their Special Constables. The Firemen of the several Fire-Offices in the City were also desired to be in readiness to assist in preventing tumult, whilst within the goal of Newgate a force of between sixty and seventy of the London Militia were on guard. At the west end of the town the Magistrates were not less active in taking precautionary measures. At eight o'clock last evening Cashman was brought from his cell up stairs to one adjoining the Press-yard, in which he was to pass the night. He seemed perfectly composed, but

exhibited a good deal of levity. In alluding to his approaching death, he said, "he had often faced the enemy "amidst a shower of balls, and with "the d—l before him, without shrinking, and did not now fear to face "his God!"—As he passed through the Press-yard, he exclaimed with an oath, "I wish a forty-four pounder "would now come and cut me in two, "rather than I should go into the "hands of Jack Ketch!" In his cell he was joined with the Rev. Mr. Devereux, who, in his usual kind and benevolent strain, endeavoured to sooth his spirit and prepare his mind for eternity. Occasionally he was serious, but he frequently launched forth into comments on the nature of his past life, and talked of his *fears of being dragged like a vagrant through the streets.* On being exhorted to abandon these *unimportant* thoughts, and to resign himself wholly to futurity, he said "he had no fear "of death, he wished the moment "was then come, for he was ready "to drop, but he did *not like to be* "*exposed like a common robber.*" Again Mr. Devereux called to his recollection the willing sacrifice made by our Redeemer for the salvation of mankind, and entreated him in like manner to offer himself meekly to his Maker as an atonement for his sins—he exclaimed, "I do die willingly, "and would go to the mast-head "now to receve a rope for my death, "for I know that my next voyage "must be to Jack Ketch!" He accompanied this last remark with a laugh. In this sort of converse he remained till twenty minutes after ten, when Mr. Devereux took his departure, remarking that the poor fellow was perfectly resigned to his fate; but at the same time evidently looked towards it with a levity which *bordered on a confusion of intellect.* His mind was constantly directed to past events, and on every opportunity he introduced some observations connected with his former life. Mr. Devereux stated, that he had received a letter from Miss Upton, the daughter of the gentleman who has undertaken to administer to the will of the unhappy man, stating that previous to his leaving Ireland he was in the greatest distress, and on embarking in the packet for England, had *but two ten-penny pieces in his pocket.* She added, that he had *borne an irreproachable character.*—On the departure of Mr. Devereux, a gentleman named Boyle, a Catholic, accompanied by two friends, and Quinland, to whom Cashman seemed attached, entered his cell, and sat up with him the whole night. Every attempt was made to awaken him to a sense of his situation; but he still seemed *bent on a repetition of his supposed wrongs* and former adventures.—This morning at a quarter before five, the platform on which executions usually take place, and which is fixed on wheels for the convenience of removal, was drawn from the Sessions-house-yard to Skinner-street, and placed directly in front of Mr. Beckwith's house. Even at this early hour several persons had collected, in order to secure places from whence to have a close view of the dreadful ceremony. Many of these were of the lowest class, but there were still some of decent appearance, who, by their remarks on what they termed the injustice of the awful example about to be made, seemed to be disposed to excite in the minds of the multitude a feeling of discontent.—At six o'clock one of the gentlemen who sat up during the night with Cashman quitted his cell. This gentleman stated that the wretched man, during the early part of the night, indulged himself in making a variety of observations on the hardship of his case, and the injustice with which he had been treated by government; but that latterly he had become somewhat more composed, having obtained two hours sound sleep. Mr. Cotton the ordinary of Newgate, soon after entered the condemned cell, and endeavoured to rouse in this unhappy man a religious sense of his situation, but he appeared

perfectly incapable of receiving any impression of that nature, his mind continually wandering from the subject to his own affairs. Nor were the humane and zealous efforts of Mr. Devereux more successful. Cashman evinced throughout an insensibility, which appeared to proceed from *a weakness of intellect* rather than from any determined depravity. He was continually adverting to his exploits while in his Majesty's service, and lamenting that he was not to die at his quarters, instead of being dragged to the place of execution in a cart like a vagrant. He asked if he might not have a glass of grog. This of course was refused; but some tea and bread and butter were taken into the cell, of which he partook. During the whole of this time he was pacing up and down his cell in a very agitated manner. Quinland was the person who seemed to have the most influence over him. They were left together for a few minutes. On the door being opened for the purpose of removing Quinland, Cashman shook hands with him, and said "Good bye, Quinland, "I suppose I shall not see you again "before I kick the bucket." As it was found that it would be a gratification to Cashman, Quinland was, however, permitted to remain in the cell, until the approach of the fatal moment. Cashman shook hands also with Mr. Smart, the turnkey, and requested that he would "give his compliments "to the other officers." Clean linen being brought to him, he changed his shirt and drawers, put on a sailor's blue jacket and white trowsers, and tied on a black silk handkerchief. He then expressed his readiness to die, and the door of his cell opening for the admission of some one, he stepped forward with great alacrity, saying, "am I to go now?" The two sheriffs of London, Mr. Alderman Bridges, and Mr. Kirby, and one of the Under Sheriffs, all of whom had arrived at Newgate about seven o'clock, now entered the press-yard. Cashman was brought out, and stood with much unconcern while his fetters where knocked off, looking at and assisting in the operation. His hands were tied, and on his arms being bound behind him with a cord, he called out to the Sheriff's officer in the sea phraseology —"haul it tought;" and again expressed his regret that he could *not die at his quarters like a man*. Mr. Cotton and Mr. Devereux once more attempted to administer religious consolation to him, but in vain. —He evinced the utmost impatience, exclaiming "*don't bother me—it's of* "*no use: I know nothing at all* "*about the matter.*" The subjects which at that awful instant seemed nearest his mind, were *the mode of his death*, and the *disposition of his little property*. On his expressing his *uneasiness on this last head*, the Sheriffs very benevolently *assured him* that measures should be taken to carry into effect his wishes with respect to it. This *assurance* appeared to be *very satisfactory* to him, and he said gratefully, "thank you, Gentlemen." Every thing being in readiness, the loud toll of the prison bell gave the signal for the procession to move. Of the ten or twelve individuals present, Cashman was probably *the only one unappalled by the melancholy sound.* He looked about him with the most obdurate expression of countenance; cried, as if involuntarily, "God bless you all!" and marched firmly through the various passages of the prison to the Debtor's Door, preceded by the Sheriffs, and accompanied by the Ordinary and Mr. Devereux. While the Sheriffs were thus attending their duty within doors, the City Marshals were extremely active without; indeed the arrangements made by these Gentlemen to prevent confusion cannot be too highly praised. A strong wooden rail was erected from the corner of Newgate-street next the prison, to the corner of the railing of St. Sepulchre's church-yard. In front of this an immense force of constables was placed, armed with staves, who prevented every person

from passing that boundary. Similar measures were adopted at all the other avenues leading to the fatal machine; and thus a wide and uninterrupted space was preserved from the goal down to the end of Old Snow-hill, below Mr. Beckwith's shop. The crowd collected beyond these boundaries exceeded all calculation, extending in every direction as far as the eye could reach, and, in fact, to every spot from whence a view of the passing scene could be commanded. The character of the multitude was of course various: but it consisted for the most part of persons of an inferior description, among whom strong symtoms of discontent evidently prevailed: and but for the immense force of the civil power, there was reason to believe much mischief would have been done. Lest any attempt should be made at rescue, a signal was concerted, by which a person placed on Holborn-hill could be instructed to call in the aid of the military, several parties of whom were under arms. It was about ten minutes before eight o'clock when the culprit quitted the prison, and took his seat in the *much-dreaded cart*, which was prepared for his reception. The executioner and his assistant sat on each side of him. His firmness was unabated, and not a muscle of his countenance betrayed the slightest appearance of fear.—During the short time which elapsed while the Sheriffs, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Cotton and the Rev. Mr. Devereux, were getting into their carriages, a few persons collected about the cart and shook hands with him.—Looking towards the prison-door, at which one of the turnkeys stood, he said in a laughing manner, "Good bye, Bishop; God bless you my hearty:" and then addressing himself to the others, he exclaimed, "This is not for cowardice—I am "not brought to this for any robbery "—I am going to die; but I shall not "shrink. If I was at my quarters, I "would not be killed in the smoke: "I'd be in the fire. I have done "nothing against my King and coun-"try; *but fought for them.*"—Every thing being at length in readiness, the melancholy procession moved forward. The criminal, as he passed along, nodded to the crowd, *and continued to inveigh, in loud language, against the injustice of his punishment*, declaring he had done nothing but what he was *driven* to, and that he had been *robbed by merchants as well as Government of his due.* "This," said he, "is what brought me here! "I always fought for my King and "country, and this is my end."—As the Sheriffs advanced, the mob expressed the strongest feelings of indignation: groans and hisses burst from all quarters, and attempts were made to rush forward. The officers, however, stood firm to their posts, and, being aided in their efforts by the wooden barriers, succeeded in preventing any encroachment. This conduct was frequently repeated before the cart had reached its destination; and Cashman joined his voice to the shouts, crying out, "*Huzza! my boys, I'll die like "a man!*" On his quitting the cart, and mounting the scaffold, the groans were redoubled: he seemed to enter into the spirit of the spectators, and *joined in their exclamations with a terrific shout.* He repeated his former remarks on the supposed hardship of his case. His face was placed towards Holborn-hill, but he turned his head on all sides, and greeted the mob with cries of "*Hurra, my hearties in the "cause! success! cheer up!*"—The Rev. Mr. Cotton and Mr. Devereux now ascended the platform, and endeavoured to bring the wretched man to a sense of his awful situation. Their benovolent exertions, however, were fruitless: he appeared callous to all religious exhortations, and pushing them aside, exclaimed, "*Don't bother me—"it's no use; I want no mercy but from "God!*"—The executioner then came forward, and put the rope round his neck. This operation excited new tumults, and fresh exclamations of disapprobation burst from the crowd.

On the night-cap being put over his face, he said, "*For God's sake let "me see till the last; I want no cap.*" In this he was indulged, and the cap was withdrawn. He now turned towards Mr. *Beckwith's house in an angry manner*, and *shaking his head*, said, "I'll be with you, there," meaning he would haunt the house after his death. Again turning to the people, he cried, "I am the *last of* "*seven* of them that fought for my "king and country; *I could not get* "*my own, and that has brought me* "*here.*" The executioner having quitted the platform, the unfortunate man addressed the crowd nearest him, and exclaimed, "Now, you ——, "give me three cheers when I trip." —"Hurra, you ——." And then, calling to the executioner, he cried out, "Come Jack, you ——, let go "the jib-boom." The few remaining seconds of his existence he employed in similar addresses, and *was cheering at the instant the fatal board fell from beneath his feet.* The cap was then drawn over his face, and he died almost without a struggle. A dead silence instantly prevailed, which continued for a few moments. The Sheriffs, during the execution, took their station in the window of a house opposite Mr. Beckwith's shop. After the lapse of about ten minutes, the populace renewed the expressions of disgust and indignation towards every person who had taken a part in the dreadful exhibition. Cries of "Murder! Murder! were distinctly heard from innumerable mouths, followed by cries of "*Shame! Shame!*" "*Where are the conspirators? Why* "*not hang them?*" *&c.* Groans and hisses accompanied these allusions. The crowd, in parts most distant from the platform, soon began to retire, but many thousands remained until the body was cut down. Precisely at nine o'clock a black deal shell was brought, by order of the Sheriffs, who still remained on the spot, and the body was placed within it by the executioner. The populace, on seeing this done, repeated their groans and hisses, and made an attempt to get under the barriers at the western end of Snow-hill, but were successfully resisted.

The body was taken to the debtors side of newgate upon the shoulders of four men, and it was afterwards claimed by a nephew of the malefactor, but the Sheriffs refused to let him have it until the evening, when it was to be conveyed to a house, where, according to Irish custom, it is to be *waked* previously to interment.

The platform was then removed, and part of the crowd broke through the barrier next Giltspur-street, and betrayed an anxiety to upset it, but they were repulsed by the constables. The majority of the populace dispersed, but many continued round Mr. Beckwith's house, uttering inflammatory expressions, groans, hisses, &c.

A

BILL

[AS AMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE]

For the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies.

Whereas assemblies of divers persons, collected for the purpose or under the pretext of deliberating on public grievances, and of agreeing on petitions, complaints, remonstrances, declarations, or other addresses to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, or to both Houses or either House of Parliament, have of late been made use of to serve the ends of factious and seditious persons, to the great danger and disturbance of the public peace, have produced acts of riot, tumult, and disorder, and may become the means of producing confusion and calamities in the nation;

Be it therefore enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That no meeting of any description of persons exceeding the number of fifty persons, (other than and except any meeting of any county riding or division, called by the Lord Lieutenant, Custos Rotulorum, or sheriff of such county, or a meeting called by the convener of any county or stewartry in

that part of Great Britain called *Scotland*, or any meeting called by two or more justices of the peace of the county or place where such meeting shall be holden, or any meeting of any county having different ridings or divisions, called by any two justices of any one or more of such ridings or divisions, or any meeting called by the major part of the Grand Jury of the county, or of the division of the county where such meeting shall be holden, at their General Assizes or General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, or any meeting of any city or borough or town corporate, called by the Mayor or other head officer of such city or borough or town ceporate, or any meeting of any ward or division of any city, called by the Aldermen or other head officer of such ward or division, or any meeting of any corporate body,) shall be holden for the purpose or on the pretext of considering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance or declaration, or other address to the King, or to both Houses or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in church or state, or for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating upon any grievance in Church or State, unless notice of the intention to hold such meeting, and of the time and place when and where the same shall be proposed to be holden, and of the purpose for which the same shall be proposed to be holden, shall be given, in the names of seven persons at the least, being householders resident within the County, City or Place where such Meeting shall be proposed to be holden, whose places of abode and descriptions shall be inserted in such notice, and which notice shall be given by public advertisement in some public newspaper usually circulated in the County and Division where such meeting shall be holden; five days at the least before such meeting shall be holden, or shall be delivered in manner hereinafter mentioned; and that such notice shall not be inserted in any such newspaper unless the authority to insert such notice shall be signed by seven persons at the least, being householders resident within the County, City or Place where such Meeting shall be proposed to be holden, and named in such Notice, and unless such authority so signed shall be written at the foot of a true copy of such notice, and shall be delivered to the person required to insert the same in any such newspaper as aforesaid, which person shall cause such notice and authority to be carefully preserved, and shall also at any time after such notice shall have been inserted in such paper, and within fourteen days after the day on which such meeting shall be had, produce such notice and authority, and cause a true copy thereof (if required) to be delivered to any Justice of the peace for the County, City, Town or Place where such person shall reside, or where such newspaper shall be printed, and who shall require the same; and in case any person shall insert any such notice in any newspaper without such authority as aforesaid, or in case any person to whom any such notice and authority shall have been delivered for the purpose of inserting such notice in any such newspaper as aforesaid shall refuse to produce such notice and authority, or to deliver a true copy thereof being thereunto required as aforesaid, within three days after such production and Copy or either of them shall have been so required, every such Person, for every such offence, shall forfeit the sum of fifty pounds to any person who shall one for the same.

Provided always nevertheless, and be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful to deliver any such notice as aforesaid, signed by the seven persons in whose names such notice shall be given, with their places of abode and description, five days at the least before the day on which such meeting shall be holden, to the Clerk of the peace of the County, Riding, or Division, within which such meeting shall be proposed to be holden; and such clerk of the peace shall forthwith and without delay, send a true copy of such notice, with such signatures and additions as aforesaid, to three justices of the peace at the least, of such County, Riding or division, or in case the justices of the peace of the city, borough, or town, where such meeting shall be proposed to be holden, shall have exclusive jurisdiction, then to three of such justices, if so many shall then be resident within such jurisdiction, and if not, then to so many of such justices as shall be resident within such exclusive jurisdiction; and in such case, such notice so given by such means as aforesaid, shall be as effectual to all intents and purposes, as if the same had been given by public advertisement inserted in any such newspaper as aforesaid.

And be it further enacted, that all meetings of any descriptions of persons, exceeding the number of fifty persons (other than and except as aforesaid, which shall be holden without such previous notice as aforesaid, for the purpose or on the pretext of considering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration, or

other address to the King, or both Houses or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in church or state, or for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating on any grievance in church or state), shall be deemed and taken to be unlawful assemblies.

And be it further enacted, that it shall not be lawful to adjourn any meeting that shall be holden under and by virtue of such previous notice, to any future time after the day specified in such notice for holding such meeting, or to any other place than that at which such meeting shall be first holden in pursuance of such previous notice; and that any meeting of any description of persons exceeding the number of fifty persons (except as aforesaid) which shall be holden by way of or under pretence of being an adjourned meeting, for the purpose of, or on the pretext of considering of, or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration or other address to the King, or both Houses, or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in church or state, or for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating on any grievance in church or state, shall be deemed and taken to be an Unlawful Assembly.

And be it further enacted, that if any persons, exceeding the number of fifty, being assembled contrary to the provisions herein before contained, and being required or commanded by any one or more justice or justices of the peace, or by the sheriff of the county or his undersheriff, or by the mayor or other head officer or justice of the peace of any city or town corporate where such assembly shall be, by proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form hereinafter directed, to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, shall, to the number of twelve or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of one hour after such command or request made by proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of twelve or more, after such command or request made by proclamation, shall be adjudged felony without benefit of clergy, and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death as in cases of felony, without benefit of clergy.

And be it further enacted, that the order and form of the proclamation to be made as aforesaid, shall be as hereafter followeth; (that is to say), the justice of the peace or other person authorized by this act to make the said proclamation, shall, among the said persons assembled, or as near to them as he can safely come, with a loud voice command, or cause to be commanded silence to be while proclamation is making; and after that, shall openly and with loud voice make or cause to be made, proclamation in these words, or like in effect:

"Our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth
"and commandeth all persons being
"assembled immediately to disperse
"themselves, and peaceably to depart
"to their habitations or to their law-
"ful business, upon the pains con-
"tained in the act, made in the fifty-
"seventh year of King George the
"Third, for the more effectually pre-
"venting seditious meetings and as-
"semblies.

"GOD SAVE THE KING."

And be it further enacted, that in case any meeting shall be holden in pursuance of any such notice as aforesaid, and the purpose for which the same shall in such notice have been declared to be holden, or any matter which shall be in such notice proposed to be propounded or deliberated upon at such meeting, shall purport that any matter or thing by law established may be altered, otherwise than by the authority of the King, lords, and commons, in parliament assembled, or shall tend to incite or stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his majesty, his heirs or successors, or of the Government and Constitution of this Realm as by law established, it shall be lawful for one or more justice or justices, or the sheriff of the county where such meeting shall be, or for the mayor or other head officer or any justice of the peace of any city or town corporate where any such meeting shall be, by proclamation, to require or command the persons there assembled to disperse themselves; and if any persons, to the number of twelve or more, being so required or commanded by proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form hereinbefore directed, to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful businesss, shall, to the number of twelve or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of one hour after such command or request made by proclamation, that then such continuing together, to the number of twelve or more, after such command or request made by proclamation, shall be

adjudged felony without benefit of clergy, and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death as in cases of felony, without benefit of clergy.

And be it further enacted, That if any one or more justice or justices of the peace present at any meeting requiring such notice as aforesaid, shall think fit to order any person or persons who shall at such meeting proceed to propound or maintain any proposition for altering any thing by law established, otherwise than by the Authority of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, or shall wilfully and advisedly make any proposition, or hold any discourse for the purpose of inciting and stirring up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or the government and constitution of this realm as by law established, to be taken into custody to be dealt with according to law; and in case the said justice or justices or any of them, or any peace officer acting under their or any of their orders, shall be obstructed in taking into custody any person or persons so ordered to be taken into custody, then and in such case it shall be lawful for any such justice or justices thereupon to make or cause to be made such proclamation as aforesaid in manner aforesaid; and if any persons to the number of twelve or more, being required or commanded by such proclamation to disperse themselves and peaceably depart as aforesaid, shall to the number of twelve or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of one hour after such command or request made by proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of twelve or more after such command or request made by proclamation, shall be adjudged felony without benefit of clergy, and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy.

And be it further enacted, That every justice and justices of the peace, sheriff, under sheriff, mayor and other head officer aforesaid, is and are hereby authorized and empowered, on notice or knowledge of any such meeting or assembly as is hereinbefore-mentioned, to resort to the place where such meeting or assembly shall be, or shall be intended to be holden, or to any part thereof, and there to do or order, or cause to be done, all such acts matters and things as the case may require, which they are hereby enabled to do or order to be done, or which they are otherwise by law enabled to do or order to be done; and it shall be lawful for all and every justices of the peace, sheriff, under sheriff, mayor and other head officer as aforesaid, to take and require the assistance of any number of constables or other officers of the peace within their respective districts, or within the district or place wherein every such meeting as hereinbefore mentioned shall be holden, which constables and other officers of the peace are hereby required to attend accordingly such justices, sheriff, under sheriff, mayor or other head officer respectively, and to give such assistance as shall be necessary for the due execution of this act.

And be it further enacted, That if such persons so assembled as aforesaid, or twelve or more of them, after any proclamation made in manner aforesaid, shall continue together and not disperse themselves within one hour, that then it shall and may be lawful to and for every justice of the peace, sheriff or under sheriff, of the county where such assembly shall be, and also to and for every high or petty constable and other peace officer within such county, and also to and for every mayor, justice of the peace, sheriff, and other head officer, high or petty constable, and other peace officer, of any city or town corporate where such assembly shall be, and to and for such other person and persons as shall be commanded to be assisting unto any such justice of the peace, sheriff, or under sheriff, mayor or other head officer aforesaid, who are hereby authorized and empowered to command all his majesty's subjects, of age and ability, to be assisting to them therein, to seize and apprehend, and they are hereby required to seize and apprehend such persons so assembled and continuing together after proclamation made as aforesaid, and forthwith to carry the person or persons so apprehended before one or more of his majesty's justices of the peace of the county or place where

To be Continued.

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The whole of *Volume Thirty-one* is now re-printed. The reader will please to recollect that the *latter* part of that Volume consists of Twelve Numbers of Cheap Registers, beginning with Number *Fifteen* and ending with Number *Twenty-six*. The *former* part of that Volume is paged in such a way as to fit with the paging of Number Fifteen; so that this former part, together with the twelve numbers before mentioned, makes the Volume complete. They may now be bound up into a book; and a pretty little Book it will be, and will be read, I hope, by all the young men and boys in England. It will do them a great deal more good than Mrs. Hannah Moore's "*Village Politics*." The price of the former part which is just now re-printed will be *Two Shillings*, so that the whole Book will be Four Shillings. It may be bound for about Sixpence, and will serve a family for twenty years. I verily believe that four and sixpence laid out in this way would do a family a thousand times as much good as putting the same sum in one of George Rose's Saving Banks.

Paper against Gold will be completed next week. This is another nice little Book. Let a young man or a boy once read that, and pay good attention to what he reads; and I will pledge my life, that no paper money juggler ever deceives him as long as he lives.—There will be fifteen numbers of this work: that is *thirty pence*. This work is intended for the *use of Schools, and of young persons in general*. We shall be ready to receive proposals for supplying the Lancaster's and Bell's Schools, upon the most accommodating terms. As to the Universities, and the Schools at Eton and Winchester, the Youths in those Seminaries are busily employed in making "*nonsense verses*" and other pursuits of the same sublime description.

The First number of Cobbett's Parliamentary Register is now ready for sale; and though I cannot say as much for this work as for the two former, I will nevertheless venture to say that it is a very fair and honest compendium, and being accompanied by the two others, is, at any rate, not calculated to do any mischief.—*Price Two pence* each number.

A LETTER

TO THE

"DELUDED PEOPLE."

"Unhappy men, whom schoolmasters, for "spite,
"Or cruel parents, taught to read and write!
"Why need you read? Why were you taught "to spell?
"Why write your names? A mark would do "as well."

CHURCHILL.

London, March 20th, 1817.

"POOR DELUDED PEOPLE,"

In writing the last Number I was pressed for time. The Hampshire Parsons and Lockhart the Brave had taken up those hours, which ought to have been devoted to a better purpose. However, as that was the *last* public meeting, under the old laws of the land, and, as the conduct of our adversaries was somewhat singular and discovered their temper, it was not altogether useless to put an account of it upon record.

We now live, those of us who may be said to live at all, under a *new set of laws*. FIRST, every man and woman is now liable to be seized, at any moment, and to be put into a prison, and kept there, for any length of time, cut off from all communication with friends, wife, children, or any body else whatever; and also from pen, ink, paper, books; in short, any man, or woman, may now be taken up, sent to any prison in the kingdom however distant, without any charge being made known to them, without their knowing what is alledged against them, without having any idea of who

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Hay and Turner, Printers, No. 11, Newcastle Street, Strand.

is their accuser; without having even a *hearing* from any body, and without their very children knowing how they are treated, or what prison they are in. And, after all, if a man out-live these sufferings; if he do not die in prison, his time of remaining there is quite uncertain. It *may* be for a short, or for a long, time; and, if the law be continued in force, it may be for many, many years. The absolute power of imprisoning men in this way is lodged in any one of the Secretaries of State, *or*, in any six Privy Councillors. This, therefore, is the state, in which we are *all* now placed, except the Members of the *two Houses of Parliament* themselves, who cannot be thus imprisoned, without the House being first *informed of the cause*, and without the consent of the House, who would, of course, hear the accused party in his defence. But, all the rest of us are liable to be taken out of our shops, fields, or beds, and imprisoned and kept in prison, in the manner, that I have above described.

The *Next* Act makes it DEATH to attempt to *seduce* SOLDIERS or sailors from *their duty*. Now, therefore, my "poor deluded" friends, you ought to bear in mind, that, if any one of you were to ask a soldier to quit his post, or to refrain from doing any thing that he had been ordered to do, or to do any thing that he had been ordered not to do, you would be liable to be *hanged* upon the oath of that soldier. If, for instance, any man, sitting in a public house with a soldier, were to hold a conversation with the soldier, however carelessly, which might be construed to have for its object to induce the soldier not to obey any command of his officers, such man would be liable to be *hanged*. If a mother, wife, or sweet-heart, were to endeavour to induce a son, a husband, or lover, to desert, she would be liable to be *hanged*. If a wife, or daughter, were to endeavour to induce a soldier to wink at the escape of a husband, or a father, in pursuit of whom that soldier had been sent, such wife, or daughter, would be liable to be *hanged*. If a son, seeing a soldier about to plunge a bayonet into the body of his father by command of his superior (as in case of riot, &c.;) if such son were to endeavour to persuade the soldier not to obey the command, such son would be liable to be *hanged*. Supposing a son to be the soldier, in such a case, and his mother were to fling herself before him and scream out to him to spare his father's life, such mother would for such offence, be liable to be *hanged*. And, observe, this law is now made *perpetual*; that is to say, it is intended not to last for any *limited time*, but to be *always the law in future*. — Therefore, take care. These are cases which *may* never exist; but such is the letter of the Law.

The *Third* Act relates to public *Meetings*, to *Clubs or Societies*, and *Reading Rooms and other Places for Reading*. As to public Meetings, there can be no more, *except such as the Sheriffs, Mayors, and Magistrates approve of*; and, *deluded* as you are, you know very well what sort of Meetings *they* will allow of. *Seven house-holders* may call a meeting by public NOTICE; but, they must sign their Notice and lodge it with the Clerk of the Peace; and, when the meeting takes place, *any single Magistrate* may come, and, *if he chooses*, disperse it; and, if any speaker utter any thing which the Magistrate *may think* calculated to *stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the government*, the Magistrate may *take such speaker into custody*. And, if any number of people exceeding twelve remain together after the meeting is ordered to disperse; or, if any one *resist* the authority of the Magistrate in any way upon these occasions; all such persons are to *suffer death*. So that, as you see, no meeting can now be held without the consent of Sheriff, Mayor, Magistrate, or some person in *authority*; for, to suppose, that, under such a law, any *other sort* of meeting will take place is nonsense. Suppose,

for instance, that seven of us, in Hampshire, were to call a meeting by public Notice, Parson Baines of Exton, or any other Magistrate, might come to it, and if he chose, order us all to disperse in an hour upon pain of *death*. Or, when any of us began to speak, if we talked about *Sinecures*, *Taxes*, or *Seats*, or any thing else, no matter what, which Parson Baines might *think* calculated to *bring the government into hatred or contempt*, he might *seize us and imprison us*; and, if any one resisted the seizure, he would be liable to suffer *death*. This being now the law, I leave you to guess, whether any Meetings will be again held, except those, which are called by persons *in authority;* and what sort of meetings those are you know well enough.

As to *Clubs* and *Societies*, none can now exist for any *political* purpose. I do not see how it is *possible* for any man to belong to *any such society*, without subjecting himself to the pains and penalties of this law.

Then comes the part of the law that is levelled against the *press*. There are many places, where people *meet to read*. They used to meet to read the Register. One person *read*, and the rest *listened*, so that a single Register served for a hundred or two of persons; and by this method the heavy expence occasioned by the *stamp*, &c. was so divided as to make it nothing at all. There are what are called *Reading Rooms* all over the kingdom. In most large towns there are several of these. At these places books, pamphlets, and newspapers are bought into a common stock by the subscribers to the room, who go when they like and read at the room. The books, pamphlets, and newspapers are bought, or taken in, by a vote of the majority of the subscribers; and in most cases, the publications inculcate different political principles and views, because, generally, men like to hear both sides. The Magistrates and Parsons have long had great sway in these rooms, and have kept out of them, very frequently, every work that they disliked. The Register, for instance, has long been banished from the most of them, as it has been from the Mess-Rooms of the army and navy; and my "*Paper against Gold*," which now surpasses in sale any publication that ever was heard of in London, except the Register, and which is so well calculated to enlighten the nation upon the most important of all subjects at this moment, and the events so clearly foretold in which are now developing themselves in such a tremendous manner; even this work, which is purely on political economy, and has nothing at all to do with party politics; even this work was shut out of the Reading Rooms with the most persevering obstinacy. Still however, there was no *positive law* to prevent any particular work, or works of any description, from being read in these Rooms; and, the truth is, that the change of times and circumstances began to open these places to works in favour of economy and *reform*. Now therefore this new law puts all *these Rooms*, as well as all *Places for Lecturing*, whether *House*, *Room*, other *Building*, or *Field*, under the superintendance and power *of the Magistrates*. There is now to be no Reading Place, or Place for giving out publications to be read, no Lecturing place, no Debating place, without a *Licence*, granted at the *sole pleasure* of the Magistrates; and, the Magistrates may, whenever they please, revoke and *put an end to the Licence*. If the Magistrates find that any publications, which *they may deem* to be of an irreligious, immoral, or seditious TENDENCY, is kept in any such place, they may take away the *Licence* and put an end to the business of the man who keeps the Room or Place for reading. The Magistrates are, therefore, to be the *sole judges* of what ought to be read in such places and of what ought not to be read. They can *refuse* a licence to any man; and they can take a licence *away* from any man after he has got it. They are authorized

by this law to *demand admittance* into every such place, in order, of course. that they may hear, or see, what publications the man keeps to be read, or given out to be read; and, if they are *refused admittance*, they may, at once, put a stop to the man's business as keeper of such Reading Place. It is quite clear, then, that no publications can now be kept in any of these places, *except such as the Magistrates shall approve of.* If, for instance, a Reading Room at Southampton has taken in the Register, it is not very likely, that the Magistrates there will suffer the Master of the Room to have a Licence, unless upon condition of his throwing out the Register; and, if he suffer it to come in after he has got his Licence, it is not very likely, that he will be permitted to retain his Licence. So on with regard to all other publications which the Magistrates do not like; for, to be sure, *they* will look upon all such publications as having a *tendency* of an *immoral* or *seditious sort.* Hitherto it has been deemed sufficient to punish severely the authors, printers, and publishers of irreligious, immoral and seditious publications. If the works could be *proved* to the satisfaction of even a *Special Jury* to be libellous, the works were stopped and the parties punished. But, *now*, though a work be ever so *innocent* in the eye of the libel law, it may still be not so in the eye of *a Magistrate*, and then it is to be shut out of these Rooms, and the Keepers of these Rooms may possibly be ruined for suffering them to come into their Rooms, though brought in *by a vote of their Subscribers.*

Under such circumstances, it is quite obvious, that there will be no works, not even newspapers, suffered to be read, or kept, in Reading Places, except such as the Magistrates, the most active of whom are the Parsons, approve of. It is quite obvious, that *they* will now have the absolute power of *selecting* works for the gentlemen and tradesmen to read at all these numerous places; and that they will let them have no works to read, which the government do not like they should read, there can, I suppose, be very little doubt. One consequence of this will be, a great diminution of the *Subscriptions* to Reading Rooms; for, it is impossible to believe, that the Subscribers will not revolt at the idea of placing themselves voluntarily under this odious species of superintendance and dictation; and, as to those, who have *now subscribed*, they have clearly a right *instantly to withdraw*, and not to pay one farthing from the day of the passing of the act, seeing that the act nullifies their previous engagement, and leaves them not to that free choice of publications, which they enjoyed under their contract with the Master of the Room. With respect to Public-houses, Inns, Coffee-houses, and the like, as the *granting* or *refusing* of their *Licences* depend already upon the *absolute will and pleasure* of the Magistrates, it would be foolish indeed to suppose, that any newspapers would, in future, be received in them, which the Magistrate shall *think* to contain any thing of an irreligious, immoral, or seditious TENDENCY. And, only think of the extent of this word *tendency!* Only think of the boundless extent of such a word, and of such a word being left to the interpretation of thousands of men! Suppose the editor of a newspaper to insert an article, which article recommended the *reduction of the salt tax.* What does this *tend* to? Why, to be sure, a Magistrate might *think*, to make the people *discontented* with the salt tax; to make them discontented with the salt tax would be, he might think, to make them discontented *with those who compel the people to pay it;* those who compel the people to pay it are *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons;* and, therefore, here is an article which *tends* to make the people *discontented with Kings, Lords, and Commons*, and which, of course, *tends* to produce hatred of them, and to bring about insurrection, treason, revolution, and blood and carnage. There

is no bounds to this word *tendency*, and that, too, as left to the mere *opinion* of the Magistrate. Therefore it is manifest, that while the *direct* power will overawe and regulate and controul the Reading Rooms and such places, the *indirect* power will banish from *public houses* of all sorts, every publication, which is at all hostile to the views of the government; and, in short, that there will, in none of these places, be any reading, except on one side.

Hence will follow a great falling off in the bookselling and newspaper trades, in the amount of the newspaper and paper duty, in the paper-making trade, and in all the various emoluments, to which the making of paper, and the printing and binding and circulating of books and papers give rise. Another consequence will be, a disregard, a total disregard, for all that is permitted to be read. Those who disapprove of these new restraints will consider all that is now *permitted* in the Reading places as partial trash, intended to be crammed down their throats; and, even those, who have been mortified at the growing influence of opinions which they disliked, will soon begin to sicken at the effects of the accomplishment of their own wishes. They will soon begin to feel, that to triumph over argument by the force of penal Statutes, is a thing not to be *proud* of. They will very soon be *ashamed of their success*. They will very soon lose all relish for reading that which the law permits *not to be controverted*. They will soon perceive, that they are placed in the situation of a man, who being upon the point of defeat in a *boxing* match, has saved himself by resorting to the protection of a *dagger*. They will see their adversaries *retire* indeed, but retire amidst the applause and admiration of all the good and the brave, while they themselves have nothing to keep them in countenance but the unconsoling cheers of sophistry, selfishness, servility, and of cowardice without a parallel in the history of mankind.

This is the shameful state to which our adversaries are now reduced. The triumph is *ours*, not *theirs*. It was a combat of *argument*, and they have taken shelter under the shield of *physical force*. Yet, Mr. CANNING, amidst loud cheering, as is reported, accused *us* of foul play! He said, that we, who have *written in the cause of Reform*, have poisoned the sources of education; that we have turned the *capacity to read*, amongst the labouring people, to a most mischievous account; that we have acted like an enemy, who, too cowardly to meet our adversaries in the field, have attacked him *secretly* by putting poisonous drugs into the *Wells* and *Springs of Water!*

This comes with decency indeed from one of those, who have resorted to a Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act! If indeed, we had stopped the hawking of our enemy's publications while our own were permitted to be hawked freely; if I, for instance, had seized numerous poor creatures and put them in prison for selling Corruption's pamphlets, while I protected the sellers of my own; if I had caused scores of lying publications to be sent forth and *given away*, while Corruption had contented herself with a fair sale; if I, unable to *answer* Corruption, had sent out placards to be posted up against her in the dead of the night, while she scorned to resort to any such means against me. If this had been the conduct of the parties, then, indeed, I might justly have been accused of the most infamous foul play. But, exactly the reverse has been the fact. I have relied solely upon the power of *truth and of reason*; I have had no other aiders and abettors than these; I have trusted wholly to the honesty and the sound understandings of the people; and, *how have I been answered?*

But, if the people, if millions of people, if nine tenths of the whole nation, really are "*poor deluded creatures*," why has the delusion not been prevented? There are twenty thou-

sand Parsons, four or five thousand Lawyers, the two Universities, the two Houses of Parliament, many thousands of Magistrates, many hundreds of writers for pay. What! And, could not all these, with all their learning, and with all their weight, counteract the effect of one poor *Two-Penny Pamphlet!* For, you will observe, that *this* it was, which, at bottom, was the *main thing!* Lord Sidmouth, in his speech, clearly pointed it out, though he did not actually *name* it. He said, that *cheap* publications had found their way into the very cottages and hovels. And, he said very truly; but, what reason was this for suspending the Act of Habeas Corpus? He said, that the pamphlets had been submitted to the Law Officers, and that they were found to be written with *so much dexterity* that he was *sorry to say*, that, hitherto, the *Law-Officers could find in them nothing to prosecute!* And, what *then?* Why he proposed, in that very speech, *the Suspension of the Act of Habeas Corpus!* I would even now willingly disbelieve this report of the speech of Lord Sidmouth; but, from what has passed since, I am afraid that it was but too much like what the newspapers have reported.

Why not *name* me at once? Why not order me *not to write any more?* Mr. ELLIOT, one of the friends of Burke and of Lord Fitzwilliam, said, on the second day of the session, that the *designing men* were sending forth *poison* in their "venomous *weekly* "*publications.*" I will not tell this gentleman of what I might tell him; nor will I call his observations *venomous;* but, I ask him, if it was a venomous act to *put a stop to all the violences against machine owners and against bakers, butchers and farmers?*

Ten thousand of such men as he would not have been able to do this, which I alone did, and that, too, in the space of one month, and by the means of that publication, which he was pleased to call "*venomous.*" But, again, if it was venom, that I was sending forth, why was not the antidote administered? Or, does this gentleman suppose, that the superintendance of Reading Rooms, or, the Suspension of our Personal Safety, is the proper *antidote?* Is this the way to convince either me, or my readers, that we are in *error?* Are errors ever corrected in this way?

Oh, no! Mr. ELLIOT, you may be well assured, that, if the people have been "*deluded,*" they are not to be put right by means like these; but, on the contrary, they will now not even *listen* to any thing that shall be written to them on the other side. If I were to be rendered silent, they would still, more firmly than ever, adhere to my doctrines. They would, and they will at any rate, treasure up all the *Little Books* that they have got.—They will sooner part with their shirts than they will part with them. As measures to close the people's eyes against these Books, the new laws have come *too late.* That which you call "*venom,*" and which I call wholesome food for the mind, has *already been received* to repletion. Little more could have been done in the way of *inculcating principles;* if nothing at all were done in addition, those principles will never be eradicated, and never cease to actuate the minds of Englishmen; and, though at the bottom of a dungeon, I shall always have the consolation to reflect, that more, *many more*, than *a million* of my Little Books are in the hands of my countrymen.

Towards me above all men this treatment is most foul. I have never practised *delusion;* I have never courted *popularity;* I never fell into the cry against Tythes or that against the Corn bill; I have never endeavoured to set the poor against the rich; I have never been guilty of an attempt to practise delusion of any sort. My hostility to the Funding System has been long and persevering; I have proposed the checking of its mischiefs to every man in high station, to whom I have ever had an opportunity of speaking.

Fourteen years ago, when the interest of the debt was only just half what it is now, I urged the adoption of this measure. A thousand times did I endeavour to impress upon the mind of Mr. WINDHAM a sense of the extreme danger of this terrible system, and this is a fact very well known to Mr. ELLIOT, who did not then appear to look upon my sentiments as "*venomous.*" I laid a plan before Mr. Windham, which, if it had been adopted, would have insured, at this day, tranquillity, happiness and liberty, instead of what we have the sorrow and the shame to feel. It was not a subject congenial to his turn of mind. He thought my apprehensions groundless. He used to say, that it would be time enough to jump over that ditch *when we came to it*; but, I answered, that, if we staid 'till we got to the ditch, we *never should be able to jump over it.* I told him a thousand times, that if the Funding System were not effectually checked, this nation *must be enslaved.* I told him, that at last, the thing would become wholly *unmanageable;* that it would roll backwards and forwards like the billows of the troubled ocean, swallowing up a certain portion of happiness at every roll, and that at last, it would *produce* the very thing that the war and that all his endeavours had been intended to *prevent.*

And, have I, then, my countrymen, *deluded* you as to this subject, upon which all others depend? Have I told you any thing, as to this greatest of all points, more than I told this statesman many years ago? The only difference is, that you have listened to me, and he did not, because I could not make him see the danger. The application for a Reform of the Parliament we have proved to be just and expedient; but, this is a matter which still admitted of *discussion.* The misery, however, produced by the funding system came and *mixed itself* with the question of Reform. And, whose fault was that? Not mine; for, I would, long ago, have effectually prevented the misery by checking the funding system; and that, I know, could be done even *now.* But, because the misery existed, were we not to urge our claims for Reform in a peaceable and orderly manner, and with the observance of all the forms and ceremonies prescribed by the Constitution?

No: you have not been *deluded.* It is not a *misfortune* that you have been able to *read.* You have read, and you understand, and will long remember, what you have read. It is quite impossible for any man to foresee what will now take place; but, it must be clear to every one, that the measures which have been adopted will not operate as a cure for any part of the evils that oppress the country. My real belief is, that a few *conciliatory words* would have done much more than all these laws; and, besides, the mere *absence of tumult* is not *tranquillity.* That tranquillity which is worth any thing must have a source other than that of force and of fear. Prosperity never can return under these laws, which, if they continue in force for any length of time, will infallibly reduce the nation to a state of feebleness such as it never before knew. Its character will sink very fast, and, along with its character, its resources and its power. There are now a million people, men and their families, supported by *subscription*, exclusive of the paupers usually so called. In such a state of things how is it possible that the people should not become utterly degraded, while, at the same time, the means of employment are daily growing less and less?

These are *all* the natural and inevitable consequences of a Funding System. A Funding System has never existed in *any* country, without producing indescribable misery. PAINE most aptly observed, that such a System gave *unnatural vigour* 'till it arrived at its climax, and then it produced unnatural poverty and *feebleness.* This has been precisely the

case here; and, as to the nonsense about "a *sudden transition from war to peace*," it is only the offspring of sickly brains. Here is a great cause of misery and feebleness at work, and nothing can restore happiness and energy except the removal of that cause. Mr. CANNING and his fellow-labourer Mr ELLIOT may scold about my "*poison*" and "*venom*" as long as they please; but to my shop they must come at last, or the malady will end in a most dreadful convulsion.

Before I conclude, let me notice a famous falsehood, which has appeared in the Morning Post of the 18th instant, in the following words:—"COBBETT "CHASTISED.—In one instance at "least, this Hectoring Bully has met "with his deserts. Understanding "that he passed the night of Sunday at "*Mr. Timothy Brown's at Peckham*, "Mr. LOCKHART repaired thither "early yesterday morning, with the "intention of chastising the Re-"former for his insolence at Win-"chester. Before Mr. L. had reach-"ed the Bricklayers' Arms, *he met* "*Cobbett* returning to town, and, be-"ing furnished with *a tremendous* "*horse-whip, he applied it sans cere-*"*monie, to the broad and well-adapt-*"*ed shoulders of his antagonist.* "COBBETT escaped into *the shop of* "*Mr. Jones, the apothecary*, where he "remained for two hours. His sconce "appears to have suffered consider-"able damage, as he *was seen to leave* "*the apothecary's shop with an enor-*"*mous plaster over his left eye.*"

Now, who, at a distance from London, would not believe this to be *true?* Who would not believe, that there was, at least, truth in *some part* of it? Who would not believe, that, at any rate, I was *at Mr. Brown's on Sunday?* Who would believe, that it was *wholly* false? Nevertheless, I never was within several miles of Peckham last Sunday; I slept at No. 8, Catherine Street on that night; I never was out of that house on the Monday; and I have never seen *Lockhart the Brave* since he came to me, with his *two witnesses*, at the Black Swan at Winchester!

This is "*delusion*" indeed! It is the readers of these vile publications who are "*deluded.*" This is, however, only a specimen of what Corruption is capable of, and of what she has long practised. It is, after this, hardly necessary to say, that it would be foolish, and even base, in my readers, ever again to listen for one moment to any thing which Corruption's press may say *against me*, be it what it may, and be it stated with whatever solemnity. I have often said, that these men would not stick at *false oaths;* and, I am persuaded, that the public will now be of my opinion. Can any one believe, that a wretch, who could sell himself to a purpose like this, would not *sell his oath*, if he could get a good price for it? I have often said, and I repeat, that those, who have the power over the greater part of the London press, are *the very basest of mankind.* The wretch, who publishes this "*venom*," is a staunch partizan of the late measures, and a gross calumniator of the friends of Reform. There needs no more upon the subject. The nation will *judge* him all in good time.

I am, my worthy Countrymen,

Your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. The narrative and document, relative to Napoleon, I take from the public papers. It is of great interest; and it is fit, that you all should read it and *preserve* it. You will know very well what *opinion* to form on the subject without any commentary of mine.

AN

APPEAL

TO THE

BRITISH NATION,

&c. &c. &c.

If any doubts could have existed in my mind as to the execution of the duty I owed my unfortunate master, these doubts would have been removed by the generous feelings which every Englishman has expressed to whom I have related the story of his sufferings. It is now manifest to me, that the British nation has only to know the facts I am about to state for amelioration of that treatment, which not only imbitters his existence, but which menaces life itself, and affixes a deep stain on the character of a country to whose officers he surrendered himself, in the confidence of its honour and magnanimity.

I shall take care not to abuse the feelings of those I address by an exaggerated statement. I shall confine myself to a strict relation of facts, supported by the document which is annexed. In taking this measure, I rely on the protection of the English nation, as I have not been guilty of any calumny, or intended offence, and I trust an appeal to humanity and the laws of nations will not be slighted or rejected, because it is made by an humble individual in favour of unfortunate greatness.

I am a native of the Island of Corsica; at the age of thirteen I entered the military service in the battalion of Corsican sharp-shooters. I was present at the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, Prussian Elau, Friedland, Ratisbonn, Eckmuhl, Aspern, Ypersberg, Wagram, and finally at the battle of Polosk, after which I quitted the profession of a soldier for that of a courier. When the Emperor departed from Fontainbleau for the Island of Elba, I determined on following him without feeling any concern about the rank in which I might continue my services. A short time after our arrival I was presented to the Emperor. He recognized an old soldier who had never failed in the fulfilment of his duty, and had the goodness to grant me the places of messenger to his cabinet and keeper of his port-folio. I returned to France in 1815, in the suite of the Emperor, and after the battle of Waterloo, I accompanied him to Rochefort, and on board the English ship the *Bellerophon*. Finally, I was one of the few faithful servants of his Majesty, who had the happiness to follow him to St. Helena, where, for nearly a year, I served near his person.

The Emperor, on his arrival, resided in the house of a merchant named Balcombe, where he remained for about two months; Mr. Balcombe's house was neither suitable nor convenient; but for this Sir George Cockburn was in no way blameable. On every occasion he endeavoured to conciliate the duties of his office with the respect and delicacy which were due to the rank and misfortunes of his august prisoner.

From thence the Emperor was transferred to Longwood, which was once a farm belonging to the East India Company. In this wretched asylum he stills remains. His sleeping chamber is scarcely large enough to contain a bed and a few chairs. The roof of this hovel consists of paper, coated with pitch, which is beginning to rot, and through which the rain water and dew penetrate. In addition to all these inconveniences, the house is infested by rats who devour every thing that they can reach! All the Emperor's linen, even that which was lately sent from England, has been gnawed and completely destroyed by them. For want of closets, the linen is necessarily exposed upon the floor. When the Emperor is at dinner, the rats run about the apartment, and even creep between his feet.

The report of a house having been built for the Emperor, which, it has

been said, was sent from England, is entirely false. Some pieces of timber work have, indeed, arrived; but the governor declared that a house cannot be built in less than three or four years.

When the Emperor was established at Longwood, Sir G. Cockburn introduced the most exact economy into every branch of the expenditure. The Emperor, however, never wanted what was necessary, and the Admiral always took care that nothing should be refused which, with due regard to the locality, the person of the Emperor, and his duty, was indispensable.

It is not, however, economy which the *new* Governor has introduced into the household of the Emperor, *it is absolute want.*

It is to be recollected the Governor took upon himself the entire charge of the maintenance of Napoleon and his suite; but the provisions he furnishes are always in too small a quantity, and also, very often, of bad quality. In the latter case, when the Emperor's house-steward (Cipriani) has found himself under the necessity of sending back the provisions, the articles are never replaced by others more fit for use, and it has been necessary to wait until the following day for a supply.

It has often happened that, on finding himself without any butchers' meat for the Emperor's table, the steward has sent me to purchase a sheep, for which I have paid *four guineas*, and often could only procure *pork* for making soup.

Captain Poppleton, of the 53d regiment, appointed to guard the Emperor, if he is the man of honour I believe him to be, will not fail to bear witness that he has often lent candles to lighten this abode of desolation, as well as bread, butter, poultry, and even salt. I was even, from necessity, in the habit of repairing secretly to the English camp to purchase butter, eggs, and bread, of the soldiers' wives, otherwise the Emperor would often have been without breakfast, and even without dinner!

The Governor sent seven servants to Longwood, but the Emperor was obliged to dismiss four of them *from inability to supply them with food!* on which the Governor granted soldiers' rations to the three that remained.

Often has it also happened that Cipriani, the steward, has purchased from these three servants *the rations of bread* they received from the camp, in consequence of the want of provisions for the Emperor and his suite, which had not arrived.

It is a fact, which will appear incredible, but which is not less true, that *the Emperor is limited to a bottle of wine per day!* Marshal and Madame Bertrand, General Montholon and his Lady, General Gourgand and Count de Las Cazas have also each their bottle.

Marshal Bertrand has three children; M. de Montholon two; and M. de Las Cazas one, about fifteen or sixteen years of age! and for all these mouths the Governor allows no rations!

In this state of things the Emperor has been compelled to sell all his plate, to procure the first necessaries of life! I myself broke it in pieces before it was sent to the market. The produce of the sale was deposited, by order of the Governor, in the hands of Mr. Balcombe, and the Emperor was not permitted to touch a single penny.

When the house-steward, wishing to supply the deficiency of the provisions furnished by the Governor, makes purchases himself (which happens every day!) he can only pay them by orders upon Mr. Balcombe.

I used to rise at break of day, and when I did not succeed in shooting a few pigeons, in the neighbourhood of our dwelling, the Emperor frequently had nothing for breakfast. The provisions do not reach Longwood until two or three o'clock in the afternoon, and when they were of so bad a quality that the house-steward had to send them back, the Emperor subsisted entirely on the produce of my shooting. On these occasions, the cook thought

himself fortunate in having brought from Paris some portable cakes, with which he made soup for the Emperor.

There is no water fit for cooking at Longwood. Very good water may, however, be procured at a distance of twelve hundred yards, which might be conveyed to the Emperor's barracks at an expence of from twelve to fifteen hundred francs.

The house is only supplied by the water which is brought from this fountain; it is open only once during the day; at all other times it is locked. The key is kept by an English officer, who is scarcely ever present when water is wanted. There is a conduit for conveying water to the English camp; but it was thought unnecessary to do as much for the unfortunate Napoleon.

I spare the great and humane English nation a picture of the other insults and humiliations, to which the Emperor is exposed, and also a further detail of the complaints, which the Emperor makes against the Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe. I shall confine myself to observing, that at the last visit the Governor made to Longwood, and at which I was present, he offended him to such a degree, that the Emperor said, "Have "you not, then, done with insulting "me? Leave my presence, and let "me never see you again, unless "you have received orders from your "government to assassinate me: you "will then find me ready to lay open "my breast to you. My person is "in your power. You may shed my "blood."

The climate of Longwood is, besides, most unhealthy; every thing is there in extremes—the humidity, the wind, and the heat.

Admiral Cockburn had marked out a circuit of two leagues for the Emperor's promenade; the present Governor has, without any motive, abridged it to half a league.

The inconveniences of the climate of Longwood, and particularly the humidity to which the Emperor is exposed, have considerably injured his health, and it is the opinion of his English physician that he cannot remain there another year without hazarding his life.

The Emperor having disposed of his plate could dispense with the services of the keeper of the plate, and having been compelled to diminish the number of his horses, for want of a sufficient supply of forage, he has discharged one of the two grooms whom he kept in his service; having no longer any cabinet, the office of *huissier* became equally superfluous, and he thought proper to dismiss me. In the same manner objects of the first necessity, for his household, suffer daily diminution.

Colonel Poniatowski has since been removed from the Island by order of the Governor.

We departed fom Saint Helena on the 28th of October, on board the English frigate the Orontis, and after having sailed to the Cape of Good Hope, we again returned to St. Helena. There we remained for several days without being suffered to land. The Emperor having been informed of our return, caused some provisions to be purchased at James Town for our voyage to England, which were sent on board the vessel. We were, however under the necessity of sending back the live stock, as the Captain insisted on our killing it immediately. As for the wine, we never tasted it during the voyage, as we would not submit to have the Emperor's present, which was strictly our own, distributed to us in *rations* by the Captain.

On the 25th of February we arrived at Portsmouth, from whence I proceeded to London, to fulfil the painful but sacred duty which I now discharge, by the publication of this narrative.

LETTER,

By order of the Emperor Napoleon, addressed by General Count Montholon, to Sir Hudson Lowe, British Governor of the Island of St. Helena.

August 25th, 1816.

GENERAL, I have received the Treaty of the 2d of August, 1815, concluded between His Britannic Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Prussia, which accompanied your letter of the 23d of July.

The Emperor Napoleon protests against the contents of that Treaty; he is not the prisoner of England. After having placed his abdication in the hands of the Representatives of the Nation, for the *advantage of the Constitution adopted by the French people, and in favour of his Son*, he repaired voluntarily and freely to England, with the view of living there, as a private individual, under the protection of the British laws. *The violation of every law cannot constitute a right.* The person of the Emperor Napoleon is actually in the power of England, but he neither has been, nor is, in the power of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, either in fact or of right, even according to the laws and customs of England, which never included, in the exchange of prisoners, Russians, Prussians, Austrians, Spaniards, or Portuguese, though united to these powers by treaties of alliance and making war conjointly with them.

The Convention of the 2d of August, concluded fifteen days after the Emperor was in England, cannot have of right any effect. It exhibits only a spectacle of the coalition of the four greatest Powers of Europe for the oppression of *a single man!*—a coalition which the opinion of every nation and all the principles of sound morality equally disavow.

The Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the King of Prussia, having neither in fact or in right any claim over the person of the Emperor Napoleon, could decide nothing respecting him.

Had the Emperor Napoleon been in the power of the Emperor of Austria, that Prince would have recollected the relations which religion and nature have formed *between a father and a son*—relations which are never violated with impunity.

He would have recollected that Napoleon had *four times* restored to him his throne: viz. at Leoben in 1797, at Luneville in 1804; when his armies were under the walls of Vienna, at Presburgh, in 1806, and at Vienna in 1809; when his armies had possession of the capital and three-fourths of the monarchy! That Prince would have recollected the protestations he made to Napoleon at the *bivouac* in Moravia in 1806, and at the interview in Dresden in 1812.

Had the person of the Emperor Napoleon been in the power of the Emperor Alexander, he would have recollected the ties of friendship contracted at Tilsit, at Erfurth, and *during twelve years of daily correspondence.*

He would have recollected the conduct of the Emperor Napoleon the day after the battle of Austerlitz, when, though he could have made him, with the wreck of his army, *prisoner*, contented himself with taking his parole, and *allowed* him to operate his retreat. He would have recollected the dangers to which the Emperor Napoleon personally exposed himself in order to extinguish the fire of Moscow, and to preserve that capital for him—assuredly, that Prince would never have violated the duties of friendship and gratitude towards a friend in misfortune.

Had the person of the Emperor Napoleon been in the power of the King of Prussia, that Sovereign could not have forgotten that it depended on the Emperor, after the Battle of Friedland, to place another Prince on the throne of Berlin. He would not have forgotten, in the presence of a *disarmed* enemy, the protestations of attach-

ment and the sentiments of gratitude which he testified to him in 1812 at the interviews in Dresden.

It accordingly appears from articles 2 and 5, of the Treaty of the 2d of August, that these Princes, being incapable of exercising any influence over the disposal of the Emperor, who was not in their power, accede to what may be done thereon by His Britannic Majesty, who takes upon himself the charge of fulfilling every obligation. These Princes have reproached the Emperor Napoleon with having preferred the protection of the English laws to theirs. The false ideas which the Emperor Napoleon had formed of the liberality of the laws of England, and of the *influence of the opinion of a great, generous, and free people over their government,* decided him to prefer the protection of *these* laws to that of a *father-in-law* or an old friend. The Emperor Napoleon had it in his power to secure, by a diplomatic treaty, whatever was personal to himself, by putting himself either at the head of the army of the Loire, or at the head of the army of the Gironde, commanded by General Clausel; but wishing, henceforth, for nothing but retirement and the protection of the laws of a free state, either English or American, all stipulations appeared to him unnecessary. He conceived that the English people were more bound by a conduct which was, on his part, frank, noble, aud full of confidence, than they would have been by the most solemn treaties. He has been *deceived,* but this error will for ever cause *true* Britons to blush, and will, in the present as well as the future generations, be *a proof of the bad faith of the English Administration.*

Austrian and Prussian commissioners are arrived at St. Helena. If the object of their mission be the fulfilment of a part of the duties which the Emperors of Austria and Russia have contracted by the Treaty of the 2d of August, and to take care that the English Agents, in a small colony, in the midst of the Ocean, do not fail in the respect due to a Prince connected with these Sovereigns by the bonds of *relationship* and so many other ties, traits of the character which belong to these two Monarchs will be recognized in this proceeding; but you, Sir, have declared that these Commissioners have neither *the right nor the power* of giving *any opinion on what may be passing on this Rock!*

The English ministers have caused the Emperor Napoleon to be transported to St. Helena, at the distance of 2000 leagues from Europe! This rock, situated within the tropics, and 500 leagues from any continent, is subject to the devouring heats of these latitudes. It is covered with clouds and fogs, during three-fourths of the year, and is at once the most arid and the most humid country in the world. Such a climate is most inimical to the health of the Emperor, and hatred must have dictated the choice of this residence, as well as the instructions given by the English Ministry to the officers commanding in the Island.

They have even been ordered to call the Emperor Napoleon *General,* as if it were wished to oblige him to consider himself as never having reigned in France.

The reasons which determined him not to assume an *incognito* name, as he might have resolved to do on leaving France, were these: First Magistrate for life of the Republic under the title of *First Consul,* he concluded the Preliminaries of London and the Treaty of Amiens with the King of Great Britain; and received, as *ambassadors,* Lord Cornwallis, Mr. Merry, and Lord Whitworth, who resided in that quality at *his Court.* He accredited to the *King of England,* Count Otto and General Andreossi, who resided as Ambassadors at the Court of Windsor. When, after an exchange of letters between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the *two Monarchies,* Lord Lauderdale came to Paris invested with full powers from the King of England, he treated with

the Plenipotentiaries possessing full powers from the *Emperor Napoleon*, and remained for several months at the *Court of the Tuileries:* when Lord Castlereagh afterwards signed, at Chatillon, the *ultimatum which the Allied Powers* presented to *the Plenipotentiaries of the Emperor Napoleon*, he thereby *acknowledged the fourth dynasty.*

This *ultimatum* was *more advantageous* than the Treaty of Paris, but it was required that France should renounce Belgium and the left Bank of the Rhine. This was contrary to the propositions made at Francfort, and the proclamations of the Allied Powers, and contrary to the oath by which, at his coronation, the Emperor *swore to maintain the integrity of the empire.* The Emperor then conceived that natural boundaries were equally necessary for the security of France and the equilibrium of Europe; he judged that the French nation, in the circumstances in which it then was, had better incur all the hazards of war than submit to this partition.

France would have secured her integrity, and with it would have maintained her honour, had not *treachery been summoned to the assistance of the Allies.*

The Treaty of the 2d of August, and the Act of the British Parliament, called the Emperor, *Napoleon Buonaparte*, and gave him not the title of General. The title of *General* Buonaparte is doubtless eminently glorious: the Emperor bore it at Lodi, at Castiglione, at Rivoli, at Arcola, at Leoben, among the Pyramids, and at Aboukir; but for the last seventeen years he has borne those of *First Consul* and *Emperor.* To style him *General*, now, is to declare that he has neither *been chief magistrate of the Republic, nor a Sovereign of the fourth Dynasty.* Those who believe *that nations are like flocks, which by divine right, belong to a few particular families, have notions which are neither of the present age, nor even in the spirit of the English Legislation, which has several times changed the order of its Dynasty, because the reigning Princes not having participated in the great changes which took place in opinions, became inimical to the happiness of the majority of the nation. For Kings are only hereditary Magistrates* who exist *solely for the happiness of nations*, and not *nations for the satisfaction of kings.*

The same spirit of malice dictated the order by which the Emperor Napoleon was prevented from writing or receiving any letter which has not previously been opened and read by the English Ministers and the officers of St. Helena.

The possibility of his receiving letters from his *mother*, his *wife*, his *son*, or his *brothers*, has thus been interdicted; and when he wished to remove the inconvenience of having all his letters read by subaltern officers, and to send *sealed letters to the Prince Regent*, he was informed that none but open letters could be passed—such were the orders of the Ministry. This measure stands in need of no reflexion; it gives rise to strange ideas concerning the Administration by which it was dictated; it would even have been disavowed at *Algiers.* Letters have arrived for general officers in the suite of the Emperor; they were broken open and delivered to you; but you refused to communicate them because they had not been received through the channel of the English Minister. *They had to travel back four thousand leagues*, and these officers endured the mortification of knowing *that there existed on the island accounts of their wives, their parents and their children, of which they could not be informed in less than six months. The heart revolts at such treatment!!* Permission could not be obtained to subscribe, occasionally, for the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Post*, any of the French Journals, or even to get a few detached numbers of the *Times*, conveyed to Longwood. In consequence of an application, made on board the Northumberland, a few books were sent; but all such

as related to the affairs of latter years were carefully kept back. It was then wished to establish a correspondence with a bookseller of London, in order to obtain directly such books as might be wanted, and those which related to the events of the day; but this was forbidden. An English author, who wrote an account of his journey through France, which was printed at London, took the trouble of sending you a copy of the work, for the purpose of having it presented to the *Emperor;* but you did not think fit to transmit it to him, because it had not been sent through the medium of your government. It is besides understood that other books have been sent which were not delivered, because some were directed to the *Emperor Napoleon*, and others to *Napoleon the Great.* The English ministry is not authorized to order any of these vexations. The law, *though unworthy the British Parliament*, considers the Emperor Napoleon as a *prisoner of war*; now a prisoner of war is never forbidden to subscribe for *newspapers*, or to receive *printed books—Such a prohibition exists only in the cells of the Inquisition.*

The Island of Saint Helena is ten leagues in circumference, and is inaccessible on every side. The coast is surrounded by brigs, and posts are stationed within sight of each other, so that all communication with the sea is rendered impracticable. There is but one little village, called James Town, where vessels arrive and depart. To prevent the escape of any individual from the island, it is only necessary to guard the coast. There could, therefore, be but one object in interdicting communication with the interior of the island—namely, to prevent a ride of about eight or ten miles, the privation of which, according to the opinion of medical men, could not take place without shortening the life of the Emperor.

The Emperor has been placed at Longwood, a situation exposed to every wind that blows, in a tract of land sterile and uninhabitable, without water, and susceptible of no kind of cultivation. There is a circuit of about twelve hundred uncultivated toises. On an eminence, at a distance of eleven or twelve hundred toises, a camp has been established, and another has recently been placed at an equal distance, in an opposite direction; consequently in the midst of tropical heats the eye is met by camps on every side.

Admiral Malcombe having conceived that a tent would be extremely useful to the Emperor, caused one to be fitted up by his seamen, at about twenty paces from the front of the house: beneath *this tent is the only spot which is shaded from the sun.* The Emperor has, however, every reason to be well satisfied with the spirit which animated the officers and men of the brave 53rd regiment, as he likewise had with the crew of the Northumberland. The house at Longwood was first built to serve as a barn for the Company's farm. The Deputy Governor caused some rooms to be made in it and converted it into a country house, but it was never fit to be inhabited. For this year past workmen have been constantly employed, and the Emperor, to the injury of his health, has been obliged to submit to the inconvenience of living in a house which is in the progress of building. The apartment in which he sleeps is not large enough to contain an ordinary-sized bed; but every new building at Longwood would prolong the inconvenience of the presence of workmen. This miserable Island, however, presents many fine positions, covered with trees, gardens, and even neat houses, among which is *Plantation House;* but the *ministry gave strict orders* that we were not to occupy that house; had we been permitted to do so, your treasury might have been spared the expenses which were laid out at Longwood, in building huts roofed with paper, coated with pitch, and which are now useless. You have interdicted all correspondence

between us and the inhabitants of the island, you have in fact placed the house at Longwood in a state of *seclusion*, you have even obstructed any communication which might take place with the *officers of the garrison*. It seems as though it had been studied to deprive us of the few resources which this miserable country presents, and we are as wretched as if we were doomed to live on the uncultivated and uninhabited rock of the Isle of Ascension.

During the four months that you have resided at St. Helena, you have, Sir, aggravated the unfortunate situation of the Emperor. Count Bertrand observed to you that you were even violating the laws laid down by your legislature, and trampling on the rights of general officers prisoners of war; you replied, that you would act according to the letter of your instructions, which were even more rigid than the conduct you had adopted. I have the honour to be,

Mr. General,

Your very humble and

(Signed) obedient Servant,

GENERAL COUNT DE MONTHOLON.

P.S. I had signed this Letter, ir, before I received yours of the 17th. You have annexed thereto an account, by way of estimate, of an annual sum of twenty thousand pounds sterling, which you think necessary for covering the expenses of the establishment of Longwood, *after having made every reduction which you conceive possible*. The discussion of this estimate can in no way concern us. The Emperor's table is scarcely furnished with the most common necessaries, all the provisions are of bad quality and four times dearer than at Paris. *You demand* from the *Emperor the sum of twelve thousand pounds sterling*, your government only allowing you *eight* thousand pounds sterling to defray all these expenses. I have already had the honour of informing you that the Emperor possesses no funds, that for this year past he has neither *written nor received any Letter*, and that he is entirely ignorant of all that is passing in Europe.

Forcibly transported to this Rock, without the possibility of writing or receiving any letter, he now finds himself totally at the discretion of the English Agents.

The Emperor has always wished and still wishes to defray all his expenses of every description. This he will do whenever you render it possible, by removing the interdiction by which the merchants of the island are prevented from transacting business for him, and whenever he shall be exempt from all inquisition on your part or that of your agents. As soon as the necessities of the Emperor are made known in Europe, those persons who feel interested in his happiness will transmit the funds requisite to provide for his support.

Lord Bathurst's Letter, which you have communicated to me, gives rise to strange ideas. Are not your Ministers aware that the spectacle of a *great man struggling with adversity* is the most sublime of all others? are they ignorant that Napoleon, at St. Helena, in the midst of persecutions of every kind, to which he opposes only the firmness of resolution, is *greater, more sacred, and more venerable than when he* was seated *on the first Throne in the world*, where he was *so long the arbiter of Kings?*

Those who are wanting in respect to Napoleon, in his present situation, only degrade their *own characters* and the *Nation which* they represent.

(Signed)

GENERAL COUNT DE MONTHOLON

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The whole of *Volume Thirty-one* is now reprinted. The reader will please to recollect that the *latter* part of that Volume consists of Twelve Numbers of Cheap Registers, beginning with Number *Fifteen* and ending with Number *Twenty-six.* The *former* part of that Volume is paged in such a way as to fit with the paging of Number Fifteen; so that this former part, together with the twelve numbers before mentioned, make the Volume complete. They may now be bound up into a book; and a pretty little Book it will be, and will be read, I hope, by all the young men and boys in England. It will do them a great deal more good than Mrs. Hannah Moore's "*Village Politics.*" The price of the former part which is just now re-printed will be *Two Shillings,* so that the whole Book will be Four Shillings. It may be bound for about Sixpence, and will serve a family for twenty years. I verily believe that four and sixpence laid out in this way would do a family a thousand times as much good as putting the same sum in one of George Rose's Saving Banks.

Paper against Gold will be completed next week. This is another nice little Book. Let a young man or a boy once read that, and pay good attention to what he reads; and I will pledge my life, that no paper money juggler ever deceives him as long as he lives.—There will be fifteen numbers of this work: that is *thirty pence.* This work is intended for the *use of Schools, and of young persons in general.* We shall be ready to receive proposals for supplying the Lancaster's and Bell's Schools upon the most accommodating terms. As to the Universities, and the Schools at Eton and Winchester, the Youths in those Seminaries are busily employed in making "*nonsense verses*" and other pursuits of the same sublime description.

The First and second numbers of Cobbett's Parliamentary Register are now ready for sale; and though I cannot say as much for this work as for the two former, I will nevertheless venture to say that it is a very fair and honest compendium, and being accompanied by the two others, is, at any rate, not calculated to do any mischief.—*Price Two pence* each number.

TO THE

PAPER-MONEY MEN.

The great cause of the Nation's sufferings —How this cause has violated contracts. What is the meaning of national faith.—What Justice now demands at the hands of the Government.—What will be the end of all this?

Botley, 26th March, 1817.

PAPER-MONEY MEN,

The First Lord of the Treasury has lately said, that the *Funds rose in consequence of the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act;* and the late Lord Chatham said, more than forty years ago, that the spirits of the Fundholders and Money Dealers always rose in the same proportion as the liberty of their country fell. More than thirteen years ago, I said, that, unless a stop was put to the Funding System, this country must become a *den of slaves;* for, that it would, in process of time, become impossible to carry on the System, with a great and permanent military force, and without putting an end to every fragment of the people's freedom.

This consequence was unavoidable. To collect taxes to pay the interest of such an enormous debt must necessarily produce inexpressible misery. Out of this misery must necessarily arise great discontent in the most numerous classes of the people. Out of this discontent would necessarily, in the natural course of things, arise

Hay and Turner, Printers, Newcastle Street, Strand.

tumults and acts of violence. Such *did not* arise, because hope was cherished in the breasts of the people by those "*evil minded*" men, the *Leaders of the Reformers*. But, unless a Reform took place, it was clear, that something in the way of *coercion* would be adopted. To be prepared for this coercion *an army* was necessary. Thus the *whole* of the intolerable burden arises from the Funding System; and the loss of all, even the very last of our liberties, is ascribable to the same all-destroying cause.

Lord Harrowby, at the opening of the session, said, that this system had *saved* the *country*. *Saved* it! What! Is it *saved*, then? With a press under the superintendance of the Magistrates; with a new treason bill revived; with the Habeas Corpus Act suspended in time of profound peace; with millions in a state of starvation; with a ruined commerce, manufactures, and agriculture! With all these notoriously existing, can the *country* be said to be *saved?* The Sinecures have, indeed, been saved; the Pensions and Grants have been saved; and the *Boroughs* have been *saved;* St. Mawe's, St. Michel's, Old Sarum, Gatton, have been *saved:* but, to such a degree have the nation been ruined, that one half of the people, in many places, have become paupers, and we read in the public papers, that a Deputation is coming from the opulent town of Birmingham to inform the Ministers, *that rates can no longer be raised to feed the poor*, and that the town *prays for assistance!* And, yet, says Lord Harrowby, the paper-money system has saved the *country*. His Lordship's notions about *country* are very different from mine.

If, indeed, the *peace* had brought what the Pittites promised us that it should bring; if it had brought us only the same degree of prosperity that existed before the war; if the peace had brought a peaceable government, and the usual blessings of peace, then, indeed, it might have been said with some colour of reason, that the nation had been *saved* by the paper-money, seeing that it was that paper-money, which enabled the government to carry on the war. But, as the thing now stands, what could have happened *worse* from not going to war? It is now very clear to me, as it was to Sir Francis Burdett and many other persons at the outset, that peace might have been preserved, with all possible advantage to this country. But, at any rate, what *worse* could have taken place than has now taken place? What could remaining at peace have produced *worse* than what has been produced by the paper-money war? Could remaining at peace have done any thing *worse* than destroy all our liberties and make us a nation of wretched, ruined people? No civilized nation was ever in *so miserable* a state as this nation now is. This is notorious. This is denied by nobody. Only read a paper in this Number relative to the *Watchmakers*, and another relative to the *diseases of the poor*. Only read the petitions to parliament relative to the *poor-rates*. And, then say whether nation was ever before in a state of such complete misery. And, in these pictures of wretchedness, we have a view of only *a part* of the suffering, and by no means of the most afflicting part. It is the anxiety, the heart-achings, the agonizing forebodings of the

fathers and mothers in the middle classes of life, whose days have been divided between the caresses of their children and their own incessant industry to provide for their support and respectability. Let LORD HARROWBY look at a father and mother of this description, when the former, after all his struggles to overcome his reluctance, has just communicated to the latter the fatal intelligence of his ruin. Let him behold the death-like gloom on their countenances. Let him hear their sighs, when their children, with inquisitive tenderness, ask the cause of that gloom. Let him, if he be capable, bring his mind to the contemplation of a scene like this. Let him re-reflect, that such scenes are now to be beheld in a great proportion of the farmers' and tradesmen's houses in the kingdom; and then let him say again, that the country has been *saved* by that paper money system, which has produced all these dreadful effects.

The talk about *national faith*, as applied to the funds, is the most foolish that ever was heard. What! can national faith demand the payment of *double what was borrowed?* It is the same sum in *name* indeed; but, as I have a hundred times proved, it is double the sum in *reality*. And, this is the *real breach of faith;* and this breach of faith has been occasioned, *not by the nation*, but by you, the Men of Paper-Money, who solicited and obtained from Pitt a protection against the law of the land; who thereupon issued immense quantities of the Paper-Money; who thus debased the currency; and, when you had lent *this* debased currency to the nation, then at your own arbitrary will, raised the value of the currency by diminishing its quantity, and now demand your payment in this raised currency, and by this demand the people are crushed to death. Who, then, has broken the contract? Who has been guilty of a breach of faith? The breach of faith now exists: it is destroying the nation: it has been committed by you: justice demands that you make good the loss of the nation: and make it good you must, or this nation will be wholly ruined and its power destroyed.

To alter the value of the currency of a country has always been held to be a most wicked as well as a most fatal measure. Very bad kings, before Paper-Money Men were heard of, used, sometimes, to play such tricks with the *coin;* but, it never was done, in any reign, or in any country, without exciting great discontent and producing infinite mischief. The following document of pretty ancient date, will show what were the opinions of our ancestors upon this most important subject. It is very interesting, and well worthy of public attention. It is part of a Speech of SIR ROBERT COTTON, made to the Privy Council in the reign of CHARLES II.

A SPEECH.

TOUCHING THE ALTERATION OF COYNE.

"MY LORDS,

"Since it hath pleased this Honourable Table to command, amongst others, my poor opinion concerning this weighty Proposition of Money, I most humbly crave pardon; if with that freedome that becomes my dutie to my good and gracious Master, and my obedience to your great command, I deliver it so up.

"I cannot (my good Lords) but assuredly conceive, that this intended Project of enhauncing the Coyne, will trench both into the Honour, the Justice, and the Profit of my Royall Master very farre.

"All Estates do stand *Magis Famâ quam Vi*, as *Tacitus* saith of *Rome*: and Wealth in every Kingdome is one of the Essentiall marks of their Greatnesse: and that is best expressed in the Measure and Puritie of their Moneies. Hence was it, that so long as the *Romane Empire* (a Pattern of best Goverment,) held up their Glory and Greatnesse, they ever maintained, with little or no charge, the Standard of their coine. But after the loose times of *Commodus* had led in Need by Excesse, and so that shift of changing the Standard, the Majesty of that Empire fell by degrees. And as *Vopiscus* saith, the steps by which that State descended were visibly known most by the gradual alteration of their Coine. And their is no surer symptome of a Consumption in State then the Corruption in money

"What renown is left to the Posterity of *Edward* the first in amending the Standard both in purity and weight from that of the elder and more barbarous times, must stick as a blemish upon Princes that do the contrary. Thus we see it was with *Henry* the sixt, who after he had begun with abating the measure, he after fell to abating the matter; and granted commissions to *Missenden* and others to practise *Alchymy* to serve his Mint. The extremity of the state in general, felt this aggrievance besides the dishonour it laid upon the person of the King, was not the least advantage his disloyal Kinsman took to ingrace himself into the People's favour to his Sovereign's ruin.

"When *Henry* the 8. had gained as much of power and glory abroad, of Love and Obedience at home, as ever any; he suffered shipwrack of all upon this Rock.

"When his Daughter Queen *Elizabeth* came to the Crown, she was happy in Councel to amend that Error of her Father: For, in a Memorial of the Lord Treasurer *Burleigh's* hand, I find that he and Sir *Thomas Smith* (a grave and learned man) advising the Queen that it was the honour of her Crown, and the true wealth of her Self and People, to reduce the Standard to the antient parity and purity of her great Grand-Father King *Edward* 4, and that it was not the short ends of Wit, nor starting holes of devises that can sustain the expence of a Monarchy: but sound and solid courses: for so are the words. She followed their advice, and began to reduce the Monies to their elder goodness stiling that work in her first Proclamation *Anno* 3. *A famous Act.* The next year following, having perfected it as it after stood; she tells her people by another *Edict*, that she had conquered now that *Monster* that had so long devoured them, meaning the Variation of the Standard: And so long as that sad Adviser lived she never (though often by Projectors importuned) could be drawn to any shift or change in the Rate of her monies.

"To avoid the trick of Permutation, *Coyne* was devised, as a Rate and measure of Merchandize and Manufactures; which if mutable, no man can tell either what he hath or what he oweth, no contract can be certain; and so all commerce; both publique

and private, destroied ; and men again enforced to permutation with things not subject to wit or fraud.

" The regulating of Coin hath been left to the care of Princes, who are presumed to be ever the Fathers of the Common - Wealth. Upon their honours they are Debtors and Warranties of Justice to the Subject in that behalfe. They cannot, saith *Boden*, alter the price of the monies, to the prejudice of the Subjects without incurring the reproach of *Faux Monnoyeurs*. And therefore the Stories terme *Philip le Bell*, for using it, *Falsificateur de Moneta*. *Omnino Monetæ integritas debet quæri ubi vultus noster imprimitur*, saith *Theodoret the Gothe* to his *Mint-Master*, *Quidnam erit tutum si in nostra pecceturEffigie?* Princes must not suffer their faces to warrant falshood.

" Although I am not of opinion with *Mirros des Justices*, the antient book of our Common Law, that *Le Roy ne poit sa Mony Empeirer ne amender suns l'assent de touts ses Counts*, which was the greatest Councel of the Kingdome ; yet can I not passe over the goodnesse and Grace of money of our Kings : (As *Edward* the 1. and the 3. *Henry* the 4. and the 5. with others, who, out of that Rule of this Justice, *Quod ad omnes spectat, ab omnibus debet approbari*, have often advised with the People in Parliament, both for the Allay, Weight, Numbor of peeces, cut of Coynage and exchange ;) and must with infinite comfort acknowledge, the care and Justice now of my Good Master, and your Lordships Wisedomes ; that would not upon information of some few Officers of the Mint, before a free and careful debate ; put in execution of this Project that I much (under your Honours Favour) suspect, would have taken away the Tenth part of every man's due debt or Rent already reserved throughout the Realme, not sparing the King ; which would have been little lesse then a Species of that which the *Romane* Stories call *Tabulæ* novæ, from whence very often seditions have sprung : As that of *Marcus Gratidianus in Livie*, who pretending in his *Consulship*, that the Currant money was wasted by use, called it in, and altered the Standard ; which grew so heavy and grievous to the people, as the Author saith, because no man thereby knew certainly his Wealth, that it caused a tumult.

" In this last part, which is, the Disprofit this enfeebling the coine will bring both to his Majestie and the Common Wealth, I must distinguish the Monies of Gold and Silver, as they are Bullion or Commodities, and as they are measure : The one, the Extrinsick quality, which is at the King's pleasure, as all other measures ; to name; The other the Intrinsick quantity of pure metall, which is in the *Merchant* to value. As there the measure shall be either lessened or inlarged, so is the quantity of the Commodity that is to be exchanged. If then the King shall cut his shilling or pound nominall lesse than it was before, a lesse proportion of such Commoditie as shall be exchanged for it must be received. It must then of force follow, that all things of Necessity, as Victuall, Apparell, and the rest, as well as those of Pleasure, must be inhaunced. If then all men shall receive, in their shillings and pounds, a lesse proportion of Silver and Gold then they did before this projected Alteration, and pay for what they buy

a rate inhaunced, it must cast upon all a double losse."

Thus, then, my notions upon this subject are by no means *novel*, though they have been so loudly reprobated by the clans of 'Change Alley. Here this learned man, and faithful and honest counsellor of his king, shows how nations have been ruined and oppressed by arbitrary changes in the value of money; and all that is here said of coin, is equally applicable to paper. My good Paper-money Men, you will perceive, that the *breach of faith* is here ascribed to *him who changes* the value of the money; and, have not *you* been guilty of *this* breach of faith? It was not the nation, it was not those who borrowed, who changed the value of the money. It was you; and, you see, that one of these old lawyers would have called you *clippers and counterfeiters*. "No "*contract* can be *certain*," says this great man, if the value of the money can be changed; and I am clearly of his opinion, that all contracts, affected in this way, are, in fact, broken by a force, with regard to which the parties contracting have no controul.

Is the nation, then, bound, is any individual bound to adhere to the letter of a contract, which has thus been broken by a force not to be resisted? *Good faith* requires, that the interest of the Debt should instantly be lowered *one half* in amount; and yet we constantly hear it said, that to lower it at all would be *a breach of faith!* Sir Robert Cotton had very different notions upon this subject. He regarded it as a *crime* in any man, or any body of men, even to talk of a *change in the value of the currency;* and, in speaking of the *punishment* due to this crime, he seems to have *cast his eye forward!* It may possibly be useful to you to hear what he says upon this very *ticklish* part of the subject. "And His Majesty "shall lose apparently by this alte- "ration of monies a 14th in all the "silver, and a 25th part in all the "gold he shall receive: so shall the "Nobility, Gentry, and all others, "in all their former settled *rents, an-* "*nuities, pensions*, and *loans of mo-* "*ney*. The like will fall upon La- "bourers and workmen in their *yearly* "*wages:* and, as their receipts are "lessened thereby; so are their "issues increased, either by raising "all prices, or disfurnishing the mar- "ket, which must necessarily follow. "For, if, in the fifth year of Edward "the Sixth, the third of Mary, and "fourth of Elizabeth, it appeareth "by the Proclamations, that *a ru-* "*mour only* caused these effects, "punishing the author of these reports "with *imprisonment and pillory;* it "cannot be doubted but *the projecting* "*a change* must be of *farre more con-* "*sequence and danger to the state*, "and would be wished that the *Ac-* "*tors and authors* of all such DIS- "TURBANCES in the Common- "wealth, at ALL TIMES HERE- "AFTER, might undergo a punish- "ment *proportionable*."

Thus, then, my good Paper-Money Fellows, we turn the Table upon you! *You*, it is, who have made all the "*disturbances* in the Common- wealth." *You* are the evil-minded and designing men. You are the se- ducers. You, it is, who have been working to produce an utter "*sub- version of the laws and constitution*"

of the country. But, faith! it is not *a rumour* that you have set forth; it is not the *projecting of a change* of which you have been guilty: it is the *making of the change itself*, and that, too, both forward and backward, which you have been guilty of. What, then, ought, according to this learned man, be *your* punishment? If merely spreading *a rumour* of such a change being intended, merited *imprisonment and pillory;* and if the *projecting* of such a change merited a *far greater punishment* than prison and pillory; *what* ought to be the punishment of those who have *actually made such change*, and that, too, as I have before proved, over and over again, *to their own benefit?* Come, now! say yourselves what punishment such men deserve. You are a pretty sort of people to combine and issue out *Declarations* against those who are suffering the pangs of ruin and hunger from your changes of the currency, while you are wallowing in wealth, and lending to the Bourbons the fruit of the land and the labour of England! You are a pretty sort of people to talk of your *loyalty* to your King and your anxiety for the peace of your Country! You, who have produced the slavery, the distress, the misery, the abject and disgraceful condition of a people once so free and so happy.

And, do you think, you are to carry things thus *for ever?* Do you think that you are to *continue* to convey the earnings of the people of these unhappy islands over to the Continent, there to fructify the soil, and to give wealth and strength to those who hate and will seek to destroy us? Do you think, that you are *always* to be gay, and to chuckle with delight at the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act? Do you think, that the misery and slavery of the nation are *always* to be with you subjects of sport? Do you think, that your tauntings and revilings of the Parliamentary Reformers are never to recoil upon yourselves?

I would advise you to be more moderate in your joy at the suspension of the people's liberties, and their (to you) apparently everlasting subjugation. For, take my word for it, that this state of things will not last *for ever;* no, nor for two years. Your *props* are at their wit's end. *They* have two things to look to, *money*, and the *means of getting it.* All that you look to is the money. But they must consider a little about the means; and they will soon discover, that, though a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act has *raised the funds*, it will not assist in *raising taxes.*

Your case is plain. Every body understands it. Every body wishes to see the principles of SIR ROBERT COTTON acted upon. But, here is the true history of your being supported so long. The *Borough Gentlemen*, those worthy, those loyal and public-spirited souls, would demolish you right quickly; but, *then!* What *then!* Why, the springing of the mine under this main bastion of corruption, would make a breach through which the Reformers would enter! This is the true history of the thing. You are as necessary to the Seat-owners as the Seat-owners are to you. You hate one another most cordially. They hate you, because you are keeping them poor; because their lands are

upon tick to you; because you stick yourselves up along side of them, out-do them in expense, thrust your noses in their face, and, like the bailiffs in the play of the "*Good-natured Man*," humble them in the eyes of each other, by your freedom and familiarity, which, were it not for the length of your purses, would earn you a beating from the hands of their groom. For these reasons, they *hate you;* and you hate them, because they have titles, and particularly *family* pretensions, which the possession of millions of "*Consols*" (what a word!) will never give you. You do get, and have already got, a good many of their manors and mansions and parks; but, you cannot get the *family names* of the owners, and the family pretensions. Your wives and daughters may twist up their mouths and talk about "the "*peasantry* and the *population*," in speaking of the *people;* they may put on all the airs of the Gentry, and, if they do not find an old *Gothic Mansion* to their hands, they may make you *build one* out of the gains of your Scrip; but, still, they know, that the old gentry soon *smoke* you. Country people are very inquisitive. You may have a thousand fine things about you; your wives may dress as fine as the cream-coloured horses; but, the old gentry will trace you back to Mincing-lane in a twinkling. This they do; and, in revenge for your display of wines and plate and fineries, they now and then, as it were by accident, kindly invite you to talk a little about *your fathers* and *mothers*. For this you hate them and all the Borough-mongering tribe.

Still you pull together, because your union of effort is necessary to prevent Reform. Part, however, you must, in the course of a very few years, or you will be a mutual destruction as you have been a mutual support; and, when that *parting* comes, then comes happiness to the country.

For the reasons before mentioned, it is not to be expected, that the parliament will do any thing, in the way of reduction of interest, 'till *the last moment*. But, there are so many *projects* on foot; so many nostrum mongers are at work; there is such a shifting of plans and grounds, that the thing cannot possibly go on long. Besides, the mischief is so busily and so powerfully at work in all the walks of life. The poison is so active, and is of so deadly a nature, that a cure, or death, must speedily come. And, that there is no cure short of a sponge, general or partial, I am certain. The scheme for getting the Journeymen and Labourers to make *Savings* to put into the *Funds*, and, thus, to make them all *fund-holders*, would, if it could succeed, only induce them to array themselves *against the land-holders* and not leave them either acre or stump of tree; but, it is too ridiculous to talk of, except as it is, amongst many others, a proof of the desperate quackery that is on foot.

However, *time* will show us what is to be done; and, for the present, I leave you to your dear associates and and your agreeable reflections.

Wm. Cobbett.

P. S. The following Letter from a *Medical Man* is well worthy of attention.—This Number contains the remainder of the *Sedition Bill*, and, as this Bill is now become *a law*, to it we must now look as the guide for

our conduct.—In my *next Number*, I shall endeavour clearly to trace *what that conduct ought to be.* We have done all that we now are permitted to do in order to obtain a *Reform.* The subject has, by us, been *fairly discussed.* We have, in no one instance, resorted to force, or to violence of any sort. And we have been answered as a King of France once answered the representations of the Swiss Cantons. "Indeed, Sire," said the French Minister to his Master, "the Swiss Cantons have *truth and* "*reason on their side.*"—"*Have* "they?" answered the King of France, "Then I'll *declare war* a-"gainst the Swiss Cantons to-morrow "morning!" We have triumphed in the *argument*, but there is no *arguing* with a gag in one's mouth, or in a dungeon without pen, ink, and paper. —The insults that are now offered us by the Southeys, the Giffords, the Stoddarts and by the Son of the Green Room, put me in mind of the words of a bloody man, who presided at the murdering tribunal under Robespierre. Having condemned, without a hearing and without evidence, a *fencing master*, to be guillotined: "*There*!" exclaimed the bloody and cowardly ruffian: "Parry "*that thrust*, if you can, Mr. fencing "master!" So the Southeys and the Giffords exclaim, holding up the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act to our faces: "*There*, Reformers, answer "*that* if you can!"

Diseases of Poverty.

London, 16th March 1817.

Sir,—From the wide circulation of your publication, and from your well known patriotism, I trust that you will insert this letter in your Register. I view, like yourself, the state of this unhappy country with the greatest alarm; but, Sir, I foresee evils that the generality of people are little aware of, and which you have even overlooked. The evils I allude to are far more alarming than any deficiency in the amount of the Taxes, or than the foolish schemes of the Spenceans; and their importance is such, that there is not a man in the country who is not interested on the subject.

As a medical man, then, I would address my countrymen on this awful occasion. I have, Sir, paid great attention to the subject of contagious diseases, and have read and sought for all the information I could get on this subject. it is a fact, and a well-known medical fact, too, that, nothing renders the human body so liable to disease, particularly to contagious diseases, as poverty and wretchedness. Now, Sir, it is notorious that there are thousands of our countrymen in a state of starvation, and living in places not fit to keep a dog in. It is only last week that I attended a starving family, affected with the putrid sore throat; they were living in a miserable cellar, with five pains of glass broken in the window, the floor was half covered with water, and they had no fire, and only one bed for six of them, of which the family then consisted; the father was lying ill of a putrid fever, in the King's Bench Prison. It was with difficulty I could restrain my tears at this accumulation of misery. I find it is become a common practice, now, for the poor to sleep six in a bed; and this they are enabled to do by lying three in the common manner, and the other three with their feet up to the others' heads, and their heads at the bottom of the bed. To what a state of wretchedness and poverty is this country reduced to! I could give hundreds of instances of poverty equal to the above. It is only a month or two since, that a whole family was on the point of death from starvation; and had it not been that

an acquaintance happened to call, they would have perished. One youth, a lad of 17 or 18, the eldest boy, was dead, and that for want of food, too; the other son, a boy of 15, was out, endeavouring to pawn his jacket for three-pence. The person who called on them was so much affected at the horrid scene, that she fainted. The family consisted, before the death of the eldest son, of two boys, a mother, and daughter. Food was procured for them, and their manner of eating it was more like that of carniverous animals than human beings, to such a state of hunger were they reduced. Now, Sir, you may depend upon it that this state of horrid wretchedness cannot exist long, without producing diseases of the most alarming and contagious nature. It always has been the case, and it always will be. So well is it known that the poor are more liable to contagious diseases than the rich, that, in Italy and France, it was the practice, in any large town, to drive out all the poor immediately, if any contagious disease made its appearance.

The fact is, that the poison of contagious fevers may be generated amongst the poor, from debility and want of cleanliness, and this has been proved decidedly to be the case in many instances. In 1779, the inhabitants of Carlisle were affected with a fever of the putrid kind. Dr. Heysham of that City, with great industry, traced its origin to a house near one of the gates, which was tenanted by five or six wretched families; these unhappy creatures had blocked up every avenue of light with which even wretchedness could dispose, to lessen the burden of the window tax, and thus contaminated the air of their cells to such a degree as to produce the poison of fever among them. Thus will it shortly be in this great town, if measures are not taken to prevent it. That such a circumstance has not yet taken place is no argument that it may not. To what extent the evil may go, God only knows; but that if it once breaks out, and I firmly believe it will, the progress will be rapid beyond parallel, and fatal in proportion to the misery of the people. The safety of the higher orders is now closely connected with the welfare of the poor, and a minute and constant attention to their wants is not less an act of self-preservation than of virtue.

Now as to the measures that ought to be adopted. In the first place it is very evident that if the people continue to be taxed as they now are, that hundreds will daily be sinking into the state of misery above described. The fact is, that the weight of taxation is fast destroying the health and happiness of thousands, and that if immediate relief be not given, some dreadful calamity will be the result of the present system. The only way, then, to prevent the evil from extending, is to reduce the taxes; the next object is to give relief, if possible, to those who are in a starving condition, and dying for those comforts without which life cannot be long prolonged. From private charity I fear little can be expected. The Meeting at the London Tavern is an instance of this, and of the hollowness of their intentions. There were men present whose individual incomes amounted to more than the whole sum raised. Aye, and these incomes some of them paid by the people too; the whole sum would not have been sufficient to support the distressed inhabitants of London five days, on a moderate calculation. It is not from the hand of Charity that any permanent good can be expected. It is from the hand of Justice, from the united voice of hundreds of thousands of men who demand their rights (and who are, in fact, praying for existence) with a degree of moderation that is only equalled by their steadiness and perseverance in the great cause. Until a Reform takes place in Parliament, the present system will not be abandoned, and therefore the pressure of taxation will continue—probably be increased, if possible; and thus those who are now living by their own exertions, will

shortly be reduced to indigence, and thus the great mass of human misery increased.

It is a fact not generally known, and one that makes a man shudder to think of, and sufficient to make an Englishman hang down his head in sorrow, that such is the condition of the poor, that the mothers of many families support their children and their husbands by the prostitution of their persons. Is this the end of the glorious war? Is this its consummation? Oh, shame! shame! There is something in the characters of Englishmen that distinguishes them from almost every other nation. An honest pride, an openness of heart, and particularly a fondness for their homes, and a great affection for their wives and children. What must be the feelings of a man who is supported, and whose children are fed by the prostitution of his wife? It is a most unnatural state of society, and speaks volumes as to the state of this unhappy country. Well might you say that crimes increase in proportion to the increase of taxation. The fact just mentioned is a most striking instance of the truth of the observation, producing the committal of a crime, which, to Englishmen, is odious, and which must appear horrid to every man who has either a head to think or a heart to feel. It is introducing a disease of the most loathsome kind into families, makes a brothel of the poor man's house, and subverts every moral principle.

I should not have troubled you with this letter, had I not felt myself imperiously called upon by my duty to communicate the above shocking facts to your readers, and also some opinions which experience has proved to be well founded.

Wishing you health to continue your exertions in the cause of freedom and humanity,

I remain

Your friend and admirer,

R.

Affecting Report

On the present Destitute State of the Working Classes in the Watch and Clock Trade.

The Committee appointed to investigate the Distresses of the Workmen in the Watch and Clock Trade, after a minute and painful examination of the mass of wretchedness, unparalleled amongst the same class of artizans, have now before them upwards of Seven Hundred cases, taken from more than One Thousand Two Hundred applications; and the Committee have no doubt, but the real number of destitute workmen far exceeds the aggregate exhibited to their notice. Many deserving persons feel very reluctant to make such a disclosure of their circumstances as the Committee require (in order to prevent an improper application of the money entrusted to their care); and others, who, although sinking, are not yet reduced to the general level of misery, and are willing to hope they shall be able to weather the deluge of calamity which surrounds them. The Committee provided printed forms to be filled up by the applicants, and the returns made, comprise, with their families, nearly Three Thousand individuals; a number which may be estimated at about one half of those who are involved in the same distress. It appears, also,

That the earnings of about Eight Hundred workmen, when fully employed, amounted to	1200*l.* per week.
That, for the last three months, the same number of persons have earned only about	300 ditto
And, during the last month not more than	212 ditto

Making a reduction of nearly *One Thousand Pounds* weekly.

There has evidently been a gradual decline in the Watch Trade for two years past, but during the last six months the want of employment has increased to a most calamitous extent; some being totally destitute of work, and others receiving not more than

from Five to Ten Shillings a week. Many families have been nearly starving, and such as have obtained the aid both of parish and charitable funds are scarcely half supplied. The Committee have visited the whole of the cases (with very few exceptions), and they have to state, that the returns made by the sufferers, far from being exaggerated, fall much short of their real distress.

The Committee, for obvious reasons, required an account of articles pledged for a limited period, viz. from the 25th of March to the 14th December, 1816; between which dates the following statement is collected:—

Working Tools amounting to	£101
Wearing Apparel	1211
Bedding	272
Total	£1584

What sum the whole of the pledges vested in the pawnbrokers' hands, by the same persons, within the last twelve or eighteen months, would amount to, has not been ascertained; but it may not be amiss to mention, that, previous to the investigation of the Committee, an enquiry was made of several pawnbrokers in Clerkenwell and its neighbourhood, as to the quantity of watchmakers' tools in their hands; and, by the accounts furnished, it appeared that two pawnbrokers alone held in pledge tools of that description to the amount of One Hundred and Ninety Pounds; a sum probably not equal to more than one-third of their real value. This fact sufficiently shews the want of employment, bringing with it a train of inevitable distresses. Hence arises, as the Committee have painfully witnessed, the necessity of parting with furniture, bedding, and apparel, to satisfy hunger. Hence arrears of rent and taxes, and other debts, which, from the depression of trade, those who have lived in respectability and credit, are rendered unable to discharge. Upon such circumstances follow injurious privations, despondency, and disease.

Many other evils might be enumerated, and scenes the most affecting to the feeling mind delineated—such as parents and children herding together in a miserable apartment, on beds of straw, or willow shavings—others wandering, without homes, and friendless. But enough, it is presumed, has been said, to call forth the sympathy and benevolent aid of those whose happiness is augmented in proportion as they lessen the miseries of others. Hitherto the Committee have had but little more than One Hundred Pounds to distribute, and, consequently, the relief afforded has been extremely limited; but they confidently hope this appeal will not fail to procure prompt and liberal Contributions.

Donations in Aid of such Relief are received by
Messrs. COUTTS and Co. *Bankers, Strand.*
Messrs. BARCLAY and Co. *Bankers, Lombard street.*

Also by the following Watch and Clock Manufacturers, Members of the Committee;
Mr. WILLIAM COZENS, Treasurer, *Wilderness Row, Clerkenwell.*
Messrs. BARRAUD and SONS, *Cornhill.*
Messrs. DWERRIHOUSE and CARTER, *Berkley-square.*
Messrs. GRIMALDI and JOHNSON, 431, *Strand.*

And by the SECRETARIES.

N. B. The Committee cannot refrain from suggesting, on the present occasion, that a most essential benefit would be conferred, if Watches and Clocks of *home* manufacture were more exclusively used.

S. FULLER, 64, *Red Lion street, Clerkenwell,*
WM. GRIMSHAW, 130, *Goswell-street,*
Secretaries.

March 1st, 1817.

WESTMINSTER ADDRESS.

"ADDRESS TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT.

"The Dutiful and Loyal Address of the Citizens of Westminster, in Public Meeting assembled.

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, his Majesty's loyal subjects, the Citizens of Westminster, always unwilling to approach your Royal Highness with the

expression of any sentiments other than those of affection and gratitude, feel the deepest sorrow at being compelled, upon this occasion, to approach you with a recital of grievances and injuries, such as we firmly believe were wholly unknown to Englishmen in any former age.

"After a war of twenty five years duration, after sacrifices of blood and treasure unparalleled in the history of the world, after seeing ourselves bereft of fathers, brothers, sons, and friends without number, in this long and bloody struggle, we expected, and we were told to expect, as the reward of all our sacrifices and exertions, that real peace, and that lasting happiness and security, which, as we were told, it was impossible for us to enjoy without those sacrifices and exertions.

"But, alas! instead of real peace, we see established an immense standing army, the persons belonging to which are now to be separated wholly from the people by a law, which, on the vague charge of attempting to seduce them from their duty, makes any communication with them attended with the danger of an ignominious death, and which law, by being made perpetual, but too plainly avows the intention of making a standing army a settled and integral part of the government of our country, in which standing armies have always heretofore been held in such abhorrence. Instead of that happiness, which we were so repeatedly promised, we find ourselves plunged into misery unspeakable; and while distress, bankruptcy, and ruin, are sweeping before them the middle class of society, the labouring classes are actually perishing under the various and indescribable sufferings of a state bordering on absolute starvation. Instead of that security, which was to be the great prize of all warlike achievements, every man of us now feels that he sits in that house, which the ancient law called his castle, at the mere mercy of a Secretary of State; that he has no security for any one moment of his life; that he walks at large and breathes the open air solely at the will of another; and, of course, that he is a slave, and a slave too the more degraded, because his forefathers were free.

"Such, may it please your Royal Highness, is the reward which we have received for twenty-five years of toil and blood; such is the balm for the hearts of the widows and orphans made by the war; such is the result of a deadly contest for "social order;" such is the wretched and shameful state to which England has, at last, been reduced by the measures of those Ministers, who, as the only answer to our repeated and humble supplications for the lightening of our burdens, and for the restoration of our undoubted and unalienable rights, have shaken the halter in our faces, and have rattled in our ears the keys of the dungeon; and whom we, therefore, most humbly, but most earnestly, implore your Royal Highness to remove from your Councils and confidence for ever, as the first step necessary to prevent England, once so happy, so mighty and renowned, from becoming a heap of ruin, a bye-word and a reproach amongst the nations of the earth."

SEDITIOUS MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES BILL.

[*Continued from folio* 352.]

such person shall be so apprehended, in order to their being proceeded against for such offences according to law; and that if the persons so assembled, or any of them, shall happen to be killed, maimed or hurt, in the dispersing, seizing or apprehending, or endeavouring to disperse, seize or apprehend them, by reason of their resisting the persons so dispersing, seizing or apprehending, or endeavouring to disperse, seize or apprehend them, that every such justice of the peace, sheriff, under sheriff, mayor, head officer, high or petty constable, or other peace officer, and all and singular persons, being aiding and assisting to them or any of them, shall be free, discharged and indemnified, as well against the King's majesty, his heirs and successors, as against all and every other person and persons, of for or concerning the killing, maiming or hurting of any such person or persons so assembled, that shall happen to be so killed, maimed or hurt as aforesaid.

Provided always, and be it further enacted, That if any person or persons do or shall, with force and arms, wilfully and knowingly oppose, obstruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder or hurt, any justice of the peace, or other person authorized as aforesaid, who shall attend any such meeting as aforesaid, or who shall be going to attend any such meeting, or any person or persons who shall begin to proclaim, or go to proclaim according to any proclamation hereby directed to be made, whereby such proclamation shall not be made, that then

every such opposing, obstructing, letting, hindering or hurting any such justice or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, and so attending or going to attend any such meeting, or any such person or persons so beginning or going to make any such proclamation as aforesaid, shall be adjudged felony without benefit of clergy; and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy; and that also every such person or persons so being assembled as aforesaid, to the number of fifty or more as aforesaid, to whom any such proclamation as aforesaid should or ought to have been made, and if the same had not been hindered as aforesaid, shall likewise in case they or any of them, to the number of twelve or more, shall continue together and not disperse themselves within one hour after such let or hindrance so made, having knowledge of such let or hindrance so made, shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy; and that also if any person or persons so being at any such Assembly as aforesaid, shall with force and arms wilfully and knowingly oppose, obstruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder or hurt, any justice of the peace or other magistrate, or any peace officer, in apprehending or taking into custody, in execution of any of the provisions of this act hereinbefore contained, any person or persons or endeavouring so to do, that then every such opposing, obstructing, letting, hindering or hurting, shall be adjudged felony, without benefit of clergy; and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death as in case of felony, without benefit of clergy.

And be it further enacted, that the sheriffs depute and their substitutes, stewards depute and their substitutes, justices of the peace, magistrates of royal boroughs, and all other inferior judges and magistrates, and also all high and petty constables or other peace officers of any county, stewartry, city or town, within that part of Great Britain called *Scotland*, shall have such and the same power and authorities for putting this present act in execution within *Scotland*, as the justices oft the peace and other magistrates aforesaid respectively have by virtue of this act, within and for the other parts of this kingdom; and that all and every person or persons who shall at any time be convicted of any of the felonies aforementioned, within that part of Great Britain called *Scotland*, shall for every such offence incur and suffer the pains of death and confiscation of moveables.

And whereas divers places have of late been used for delivering lectures or discourses, and holding debates, which lectures discourses or debates, have in many instances been of a seditious and immoral nature; be it further enacted, that every house, room, field, or other place, at or in which any lecture or discourse shall be publicly delivered, or at any public debate shall be had, on any subject whatever, for the purpose of raising or collecting money or any other valuable thing, from the person admitted, or to which any person shall be admitted by payment of money, or by any ticket or token of any kind delivered in consideration of money, or any other valuable thing, or in consequence of paying or giving, or having paid or given, or having agreed to pay or give, in any manner, any money or other valuable thing, or where any money or other valuable thing shall be received from any person admitted either under pretence of paying for any refreshment or other thing; or under any other pretence, or for any other cause, or by means of any device or contrivance whatever, shall be deemed a disorderly house or place, unless the same shall have been previously licensed in manner hereinafter-mentioned; and the person by whom such house, room, field or place shall be opened or used, for any of the purposes aforesaid, shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds for every day or time that such house, room, field or place shall be opened or used as aforesaid, to such person as will sue for the same, and be otherwise punished as the law directs in cases of disorderly houses; and every person managing or conducting the proceedings, or acting as moderator, president or chairman at such house, room, field or place, so opened or used as aforesaid, or therein debating any discourse or lecture, or furnishing or delivering any book, pamphlet, newspaper or other publication as aforesaid, and also every person who shall pay, give, collect or receive, or agree to pay, give, collect or receive any money or any thing for or in respect of the admission of any person into any such house, room, field or place, or shall deliver out, distribute or receive any such ticket or tickets, or token or tokens as aforesaid, knowing such house, room, field or place

to be opened or used for any such purpose as aforesaid, shall for every such offence forfeit the sum of twenty pounds.

And be it further enacted, that any person who shall at any time hereafter appear, act, or behave him or herself as master or mistress, or as the person having the command, government or management of any such house, room, field or place, as aforesaid, shall be deemed and taken to be a person by whom the same is opened or used as aforesaid, and shall be liable to be sued or prosecuted and punished as such, notwithstanding he or she be not in fact the real owner or occupier thereof.

And be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful for any justice or justices of the peace of any county, stewartry, city, borough, town or place, who shall by information, upon oath, have reason to suspect that any house, room, field or place, or any parts or part thereof, are or is opened or used for the purpose of delivering lectures or discourses, or for public debate, contrary to the provisions of this act, to go to such house, room, field, or place and demand to be admitted therein; and in case such justice or justices shall be refused admittance to such house, room, field or place, or any part thereof, the same shall be deemed a disorderly house or place within the intent and meaning of this act; and all and every the provisions hereinbefore contained respecting any house, room, field or place, hereinbefore declared to be a disorderly house or place, shall be applied to such house, room, field or place, where such admittance shall have been refused as aforesaid, and every person refusing such admittance, shall forfeit the sum of twenty pounds.

Provided nevertheless, and be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful for two or more justices of the peace for the county, stewartry, city, borough, town or place, where any house, room, or other building shall be intended to be opened for any of the purposes aforesaid, by writing under their hands and seals, at their General Quarter or General Sessions of the Peace, or at any Special Session to be held for the particular purpose, to grant a licence to any person or persons desiring the same, to open such house, room or other building, for the purpose of delivering for money any such lectures or discourses as aforesaid, or for the purpose of holding debates on any subjects, the same being clearly expressed in such licence, for which licence a fee of one shilling and no more shall be paid; and the same shall be in force for the space of one year, and no longer, or for any less space of time therein to be specified; and which licence it shall be lawful for the Justices of the Peace for the same county, stewartry, city, borough, town or place, at any General Quarter or General Sessions of the Peace, to revoke and declare void and no longer in force, by any order of such Justices; a copy whereof shall be delivered to or served upon the person to whom the said licence so revoked shall have been granted, or shall be left at the house, room or building, for which such licence shall have been granted; and thereupon such licence shall cease and determine, and be thenceforth utterly void and of no effect.

Provided always, and be it enacted, that it shall be lawful for any Justice or Justices of the Peace of any county, stewartry, city, borough, town or place, where any such house, room or other building shall be licensed as herein provided, to go to such house, room or building so licensed, at the time of delivering any such lecture or discourse, or of holding any debate therein, as aforesaid, or at the time appointed for delivering any such lecture or discourse, or of holding any debate, and demand to be admitted therein; and in case such Justice or Justices shall be refused admittance to such house, room, or building, the same shall be deemed, notwithstanding any such licence as aforesaid, a disorderly house or place within the meaning of this act; and all and every the provisions hereinbefore contained respecting any house, room, field, or place hereinbefore declared to be a disorderly house or place, shall be applied to such house, room, or building, so licensed as aforesaid, where such admittance shall have been refused as aforesaid; and every person refusing such admittance, shall forfeit the sum of twenty pounds to any person who shall sue for the same.

Provided also and be it enacted, that it shall be lawful for any two Justices of the Peace, acting for any county, stewartry, riding, division, city, town, or place, upon evidence on oath that any house, room or place so licensed and opened as aforesaid, is commonly used for the purpose of delivering there lectures or discourses of a seditious or immoral tendency, to adjudge and declare the license for opening the same to have been forfeited, and such li-

cence shall thereupon cease and determine, and shall thenceforth be utterly void and of no effect.

Provided always, and be it enacted, that nothing in this act contained shall extend or be construed to extend, to any lecture or discourses to be delivered in any of the Universities of these kingdoms by any member thereof, or any person authorized by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, or other proper officers of such Universities respectively; or to any lecture or discourse to be delivered in the public Hall of any of the Inns of Court or Chancery, by any person authorized by the Benchers of the Inns of Court, or by the Professors in Gresham College; and that no payment made to any schoolmaster or other person by law allowed to teach and instruct youth, in respect of any lectures or discourses delivered by such schoolmaster or other person for the instruction only of such youth as shall be committed to his instruction, shall be deemed a payment of money for admission to such lectures or discourses within the intent and meaning of this Act.

Provided always, that no person shall be prosecuted by virtue of this act for any thing done or committed contrary to the provisions hereinbefore contained, unless such prosecution shall be commenced within six calendar months after the offence committed.

Provided always, that all the clauses and provisions hereinbefore contained shall commence and have effect within the city of London, and within twenty miles thereof, from the day next after the day of passing this act; and shall commence and have effect, within all other parts of the kingdom, from the expiration of seven days next after the day of passing this act; and shall be and continue in force until the twenty-fifth day of March one thousand eight hundred and eighteen, and from thence, until the end of the then next session of Parliament.

And whereas divers societies or clubs have been instituted, in the metropolis and in various parts of this Kingdom, of a dangerous nature and tendency, inconsistent with the public tranquillity, and the existence of the established government, laws and constitution of the kingdom; and the members of many of such societies or clubs have taken unlawful oaths and engagements of fidelity and secrecy, and have taken or subscribed, or assented to, illegal tests and declarations; and many of the said societies or clubs elect, appoint or employ committees, delegates, representatives or missionaries of such societies or clubs, to meet, confer, communicate or correspond with other societies or clubs, or with delegates, representatives or missionaries of such other societies or clubs, and to induce and persuade other persons to become members thereof, and by such means maintain an influence over large bodies of men, and delude many ignorant and unwary persons into the commission of acts highly criminal: and whereas certain societies or clubs calling themselves "*Spenceans* or *Spencean* Philanthropists," hold and profess for their object the confiscation and division of the land, and the extinction of the funded property of the Kingdom: and whereas it is expedient and necessary that all such societies or clubs as aforesaid should be utterly suppressed and prohibited, as unlawful combinations and confederacies, highly dangerous to the peace and tranquillity of these kingdoms, and to the constitution of the government thereof, as by law established; be it enacted, that from and after the passing of this act, all societies or clubs calling themselves *Spenceans* or *Spencean* Philanthropists, and all other societies or clubs by whatever name or description the same are called or known, as above described, shall be and the same are hereby utterly suppressed and prohibited, as being unlawful combinations and confederacies against the government of our Sovereign Lord the King, and against the peace and security of his Majesty's liege subjects.

And be it further enacted, that from and after the passing of this act all and every the said societies or clubs, and also all and every other society or club now established or hereafter to be established, the members whereof shall be required or admitted to take any oath or engagment which shall be an unlawful engagement within the meaning of an act passed in the thirty-seventh year of his Majesty's reign, intituled, "an act for more effectually preventing the administering and taking of unlawful oaths," or within the meaning of an act passed in the fifty-second year of his present Majesty's reign, intituled, "an act to render more effectual

(To be continued.)

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TO THE

LABOURING CLASSES

IN

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND.

ON THE

Report of the Finance Committee, relative to Sinecure Places, which Committee was appointed at the beginning of the Session in January, 1817, and which Report is dated on the 28th of March, 1817.—And also on the Loan to the Parishes.

North Hampstead, Long Island, June 22, 1817.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,

To the honour of the fair sex be it acknowledged, that they are always ready to pardon those indiscretions, even if they amount to little crimes, which have been produced by the irresistible power of their own charms; in which spirit of lenity as well as of justice we, my friends, shall, I trust, proceed upon this occasion. 'Tis true, the sons of Corruption have, as to the Report relative to Sinecures, lied exceedingly. More than their usual proportion of hypocrisy, falsehood and impudence has been employed in this emergency; but, as these extraordinary exertions may be fairly ascribed to their fears of the people, and, as the existence of those fears are the highest possible compliment to your good sense, public spirit and resolution, we ought to enter into an examination of these exertions with a mixed feeling of contempt and compassion rather than with feelings of anger and indignation. True, all they have said is false. True, they have lied sufficiently to put even the Devil, or, what is worse, the Doctor, to the blush; but, it must be confessed, that the sin has, in this case, been extorted by the fears which they have of the people. It is an offering at the shrine of public-spirit and virtuous perseverance; and let us receive it without anger, as the Virgin Mary, at Loretto, receives the offerings, extorted by the fears of robbers and murderers.

By "Sons of Corruption" you will, of course, know that I cannot possibly allude, in the most distant manner, to any of the persons, who have made the Report, or who have ordered it to be printed, or with whom the Committee who have made it originated. You will, of course, perceive, already, that I cannot possibly allude to any of those persons. The persons whom I have immediately in my eye are those, who have published remarks, commentaries, and illustrations on this famous Report, which Report, I venture to

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predict, will become hereafter, a document of much greater account, than, I dare say, the extreme modesty of its authors will suffer them to anticipate.

I address myself to the *Labouring Classes*, in which I include, all tradesmen and farmers; for, they all labour in their several ways; they all pay taxes and receive nothing out of the taxes; and they all contribute towards the luxuries which are enjoyed by Sinecurists, Pensioners, and Grantees. It is the fashion amongst the sons and daughters of Corruption, to speak of you all as being "*The Lower Orders.*" There were formerly only *three* Orders in England: *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons*, in which last were included the *whole body of the people*. For that is the meaning of the word *commons*. But, of late years, this word has been interpreted to mean nothing but those select gentlemen, who get (in what way you know very well) seats in the Lower House of Parliament, where, according to the Constitution and the *Laws* of England *every man in the kingdom is supposed to be present*. Ignorance of the law is no plea in defence of any man accused of a breach of it. Suppose, for instance, a trespasser, who should have been taken up under the recent game-act, had pleaded, that he had *no knowledge of such a law having been passed*. The ATTORNEY GENERAL, or his worthy associate, would instantly turn to Judge Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, and there he would have found it written, Book I. Chap. 2. "*Every man* "is, in judgment of law, *party* to mak- "ing an act of parliament, being *pre-* "*sent thereat* by his representative." And, again, in Book IV. Chap. 1. "The *lawfulness* of punishing criminals "is founded upon this principle, that "*the law by which they suffer, was* "*made by their own consent.*" If the trespasser were to reply, and say, "it is unlawful to make me suffer, "then, in this case, who never was "suffered to vote at an election in all "my life," I know not what answer "Mr. *Attorney*" (by way of eminence) might give him; but, this doctrine shews, at any rate, that our forefathers meant by *Commons*, the whole body of the people, and that they never made any attempts to divide the people into *upper* and *lower orders*. Now-a-days every Paper-Money fellow, from the highest of them to the lowest, talks of the "Lower Orders," in which he never thinks of including his sharping, greedy, worthless, and ignorant self, while his novel-reading wife and daughters turn up their noses and bend their skinny and smoky necks on one side, while they talk of the ignorance of the "*peasantry.*"

Leaving the tax-eaters to enjoy their fancied superiority as long as they can, let us now proceed to our examination of what has been written on this Sinecure Report, and, as far as prudence will permit, on the Report itself.

But, first of all, how came there to be any report upon the subject? This is of consequence; because, in the examination of any document, a knowledge of circumstances that gave rise to it is generally necessary in order to enable us to form a just estimate of its contents, or of the measures that it recommends. It is perfectly notorious, then, that all the Petitions for Reform, stated the existence of Sinecures, Pensions and Grants, as one of the evils, which had been produced

by a want of such Reform. This subject of complaint had been discussed at all the public meetings. And, though the Fundholders and other Paper-Money people would not join in those meetings, and even approved of the measures adopted to suppress them, and to take away the personal safety of the people, still *they* also looked at these Sinecures and Pensions and Grants with a disapproving eye. They *grudged* them to the holders, and the more especially as those holders belonged chiefly to the *Noble families*, whom the Paper Nobility mortally hate, though they *pull along with them against the people*, upon the same principle that different orders of Monks, or, indeed, of Priests of any sort (those of the established Churches of England and Scotland always excepted!) closely combine against all the rest of the world, while they detest each other, and mutually devote their rivals to everlasting perdition.

But, it was the voice of those hundreds of thousands, who petitioned for a Reform, that produced this Report, notwithstanding the fact, as we shall presently see, has been attempted to be disguised; lest, I suppose, it should be inferred, that the yielding (in *appearance*, at least) to one of the prayers of the people, should encourage them to hope for a yielding, in the end, to the whole of their prayers in reality. At any rate, it is always to be kept in mind that an abolition of *Sinecures*, &c. was prayed for; and, in proof of this fact, suffer me here to refer to the Hampshire Petition, which complained of these things in the following words:—

"That, as to Sinecures, Pensions, "and Grants, not fully merited by "well-known public services, your "Petitioners do hope, that, at a time "like the present, your honourable "House will not suppose it possible "that they can be endured, especially "when your honourable House sees, "on the one hand, the poor-houses "crowded with paupers who have "seen better days, the jails swarming with debtors whom no degree "of care and industry has been able "to save from ruin, whole millions of "starving creatures, who, when they "open their eyes in the morning, "know not where to find the means "of breaking their fast; and, when "your honourable House, turning to "the other hand, sees the Sinecurists, "Pensioners, and Grantees, shining "with all the brilliancy of wealth, "and indulging in all the enjoyments "of luxury, each individual of some "of whom having, as your Petitioners are able to prove at the bar of "your honourable House, received, "annually, more money out of the "public taxes than would be sufficient "to maintain a thousand of the families who largely contribute towards "the paying of those taxes; nor need "your Petitioners remind your honorable House that there are some of "those individuals, each of whom has, "within the last thirty years, received "from the aforesaid source much "more than half a million of principal "money, and if your Petitioners were "to say nearly a million of money, "their statement would only approach "nearer to the truth."

Such was the nature of our complaint. We shall see, by-and-by, *how* it has been attended to; but, the moment the REPORT *came out*, the hire-

ling press set to work to endeavour to make it a ground for calumniating our petitions. "HERE," said the hirelings, "here, after all the *exaggerated* statements, made to delude the poor ignorant people; *here* is the *proof*, that the whole of these places, amounted to only *one hundred thousand pounds a year*." On the 7th of April the COURIER published the Report, and, in the very same paper, it published the following remarks, which, I verily believe, it would not have published, if it had not been well assured, as it thought, that *my* observations on it never would see the light in England. And here, my friends and fellow countrymen, let me congratulate myself on the step I took to secure my personal freedom. I defy the Attorney General, I defy even the keen Mr. SHEPHERD, whom I shall never forget, to find any thing in this Number to prosecute *according to law*, tight and severe as that law is; I defy the magistrates to discover any thing contrary even to the rules of the Circular of Lord Sidmouth; but, I could not have *defied*, for one single moment, the *Warrants* of Lord SIDMOUTH and of his worthy colleagues, CASTLEREAGH and BATHURST, which latter has particular charge of the Island of St. Helena. No: I could not have set those warrants at defiance, if I had remained in England; but, now I can; and I can *safely* discuss this important subject, without passing the line drawn even by the libel law in England, as it now stands. I said to you and to my countrymen in general, before my departure, that it was not my intention, nor was it my wish, to *publish libels;* and that I would publish *here* nothing which the *law* would not permit me to publish in England. I am, by no rule of morality, bound to forbear thus; but, I am resolved, that no one shall have a colour of complaint of my taking any advantage of my safety here to do against our enemies what the *law* would have rendered it unsafe to do *before the recent Acts*. I have published nothing here which I have not forwarded to be published in England; and, if any of those writings be the subject of trial before a *Common Jury*, or even before a *Special Jury*, upon which there shall be no man *who lives on the taxes*, and if a verdict of *guilty* be found and recorded, I will acknowledge myself to be a *guilty man*, and will *pledge myself never to write for the press again*. No man's conduct can be fairer than this. But, when I know whether the Power-of-Imprisonment Act be kept in force after the stipulated time, namely, the month of *July*, then I shall, with my two sons, petition the Prince Regent; and, if that petition produce not the desired effect, we shall then resort to *all the means* that we have in our power, consistent with the allegiance we owe to the king, and the duty which we owe to our country.

The remarks of the COURIER, as alluded to above, were in these words: —"This day we insert the first Report of the Parliamentary Committee of Retrenchment, which recommends, *a very sweeping and extensive abolition of sinecure places throughout the three Kingdoms*. We know of *no other* sinecures besides these, and consequently the abolition is *as complete as the most zealous Reformer can desire*. And to what would the saving amount even if we could at present enjoy

"the full advantage of it? *To one hundred thousand pounds per annum:* the sum voted every Session for the repair of the *Highland roads and bridges.* Such is the *gross delusion which has been practised on the public!* To the existence of sinecure places and pensions have been mainly imputed our financial embarrassments, though the whole amount of them would scarcely pay *the expence of printing occasioned in Parliament by Reformers.* The Reformers well know, that little or nothing could be saved by the abolition of sinecures; but the Jacobin part of them *raised the clamour to create a hatred of the support of a Government* they wished to overthrow, and the Foxite Opposition half of them seconded the clamour, in hopes of obtaining possession of that Government, which they would no doubt maintain by increased extravagance, as they did ten years ago.—But from these abolitions the public cannot save *even the sum expended on Highland roads and bridges.* The reforms cannot take place during the lives of the incumbents, and in lieu of sinecures, deserving public servants are to receive pensions. Thus the change will ultimately *increase the public expense,* if the observation in the House of Lords lately made by an *Opposition Scotch Earl* of *undoubted ability,* was well founded, namely, that sinecures were economical, as five or six persons would wait for the fall of a sinecure, who, if they were to be rewarded by a pension, would *insist on it immediately.* Thus one sinecure would go as far as half a dozen pensions. The Committee, of course, *recommend pensions* as the reward of *public services;* and *every change of the Ministry may thus entail on the country an additional burthen of* 40 *or* 50,000*l. per annum!* So much for the *economy of the clamourous Reformers,* ignorant or *false, factious* and *malignant.* But we trust the Committee will find real sources of saving to the public. In this Report they have given *ample proof* of their *sincerity, energy* and *expedition,* and have shewn themselves entitled to *that confidence* which Mr. WILBERFORCE refused them."

How desperate must a case be, when its advocates are even tempted to resort to falsehoods so flagrant as these! The man, who owns the COURIER, may be a very base and prostituted man. He may be a very *wretch,* in the worst possible sense of that word. But, even a very wretch does not *voluntarily* put forward his claim to contempt. He will not step aside an inch from his interest to avoid infamy on his character; but, he will not voluntarily seek infamy when the act he is about to commit can be of no benefit to him. True, such a man cannot render himself *more* infamous than he already is; but, still, ugly as a fellow may be, there are few except the base imitators of the whiskered Germans, who voluntarily add to their ill-looks. STEWART, the Proprietor of the COURIER, has amassed an immense sum of money, which he has in the funds, I believe; and, I dare say, that he would wish, like other gentry, who have amassed their money by means full as honest, to

enjoy his fortune quietly, and to leave it to some body after his death. Nothing but sheer desperation, therefore, could have urged him to this act of fraud, so easily proved to the conviction of the offender, who well knows, that it is quite impossible for him to breathe the air of *freedom* and *justice* in England.

Here is, we are told, in this Report, "a *sweeping* and *extensive abolition* "of sinecure places throughout the "three kingdoms. We know of *no* "*other* sinecures besides these, and, "*consequently*, the abolition is *as* "*complete* as the most zealous *Reformer can desire.*" And, then we are told, that all these "Sinecures amount "to *one hundred thousand pounds per* "*annum.*" Now, in the first place, there is *no abolition at all.* There is nothing *done* by the Parliament yet; and, there is nothing *recommended to be done*, which can be called *an abolition.* For, it is not ever recommended to the House to do away any place or any emolument, during *the lives of the present possessors!* No, nor during the lives of their *successors*, where the places are granted in reversion, that is to say, as in the case of OLD GEORGE ROSE, whose place is to *descend* to his son, YOUNG GEORGE ROSE, and who, of course, will enjoy it after him, notwithstanding this famous Report, if things could go on so long without a Reform in the Parliament! This is a pretty sort of *abolition!*

We will talk of the *amount* of the Sinecures by-and-by; but, amount to what they will, what *relief* can this measure, even if put in force, afford to the nation? The nation is in misery; it is sinking under the weight of its taxes; part of these taxes go to the paying of the Sinecures; and, in order to *relieve* the poor, distressed, miserable people, who are in such a state of starvation, that a sum of nearly two millions is to be lent to the parishes to enable them to keep the poor alive; in order to afford this miserable people *relief*, the Sinecures are to be abolished *at the end of* the *lives of the present possessors and that of their successors*, or, at the soonest, at the end of the lives of the present possessors! This is like the Bank of England's promise, not to *pay*, but to *promise to pay.* It is like the calculations about paying off what is *called* the National Debt. It is like Governor Sancho's feast. It is like the herds and flocks marching away from the hungry multitudes, who rear them, to be devoured by the Fundholders and the swarms who live upon the taxes. It is like a leg of mutton and turnips in sculpture. It is like the piece of bread and cheese, which a waggish carpenter chalked me out upon a board, when I was a little boy and was worrying my mother for my dinner. It is like every thing in the world, which speaks promise to the eye and the ear, and which is totally destitute of reality.

I think I have heard it said, some nine or ten thousand times, by CASTLEREAGH, by VANSITTART, by CANNING, by SIDMOUTH, by LIVERPOOL, by WALTER, by SOUTHEY, by STEWART, by GIFFORD, and by many, many others: indeed by the whole tribe; that these evils are of a *temporary* nature! That they have arisen merely from "a *sudden transition from war to peace;*" and, that things will

speedily come about again. So, then, in order to meet this temporary evil, which is, to use CANNING's Eton phrase, "only for *a moment* obscuring the face of the *Glorious Sun*" (of taxation, I suppose, he meant;) to meet this immediate and pressing evil, Sinecures are to be abolished in the *next age!* "*Sweeping* and *extensive* abolition"! Wonderful *relief!*

I say in the *next age*, at soonest; for, though there be Sinecure Placemen and place-women of all stages in life, from fourscore, perhaps, down to *four minutes*. Only think of a placeman *four minutes old!* Yet this must be frequently the case, for some of these good things descend to *heirs*. The late Mr. Fox and his brother, the General, were placemen almost in their cradle. Lord ROYSTON, the son of the Earl of HARDWICKE, who died, a little boy, a few years ago, would, if he had lived 'till now, have been receiving the amount of an Irish Sinecure of *eleven thousand pounds a year*, which, to make assurance double sure, the Right Honourable and Noble Earl had obtained in reversion for *another son after Lord Royston*; but, as ill-luck would have it, both the boys died before the Sinecure became vacant by the death of the late Earl of Buckinghamshire; and the Noble Earl of Hardwicke lost sons and sinecure too. However, as there has been discovered to be a "surplus population" in the country, the loyalty and public-spirit of the Noble Earl will have tended to make him moderate his grief, especially when he considered, that his sons were destined to eat without working.

There are Sinecure placemen of all stages in life, and so there are of the rest of the people. Some of the Sinecure Placemen are very old, and must die soon. But some of those who pay taxes to support them are also very old, and must die soon. So that, it is physically impossible, unless some extraordinary disease, peculiar to them, should seize the Sinecure Placemen; unless this should be the case, it is physically impossible, that the *present generation* should, take us all together, derive any benefit from any measure recommended by this Report, this famous, this patriotic Report, "this *sweeping* and *extensive* abolition of Sinecures"!

I knew very well, that *no abolition* could take place; no *real* abolition, unless a Reform of Parliament took place. Because, in fact, there could be no power equal to the *taking away* of the Sinecures, which would not have been equal to the taking away of the possession of the *patronage* and the *proprietorship* of the Boroughs. And, therefore, the moment I saw the Report in the COURIER, I ran my eye hastily along to see what was said about the *time* of the *abolition*. It did not run far before it came to the following all-important words: "The "view which your Committee have "taken of the two offices of *Chief* "*Justice in Eyre*, North and South "of Trent, is, that they may be abo- "lished, without detriment to the "public service, and the emoluments "thereof become *a future saving to* "*the public*; REGARD being had "in these, AS WELL AS IN "EVERY OTHER OFFICE, which "forms the subject of this Report, to "EXISTING INTERESTS"! That is to say, no office, no place, no

emolument, however enormous, is to be taken away 'till the death of the present possessor, and, in cases, like that of GEORGE ROSE, *not 'till the death of the son of the present possessor!* And *this* is the measure, which is called a "sweeping and extensive "abolition of Sinecures, as *complete* "as the *most zealous Reformer can* "*wish*"!

No: what we prayed for, was, a *real* abolition, such as should give the suffering people *relief;* and to give them relief, it must of course, take place *directly*. But, this the COURIER, in a paragraph subsequent to the one that I have quoted above, says, in answer, I suppose, to some one who had pointed out this postponement as being fatal to all real benefit; he says, that this would be "CONFISCATION," and this was what CANNING meant, I imagine, when he said, that *Reform* was "*confiscation, desolation* and *carnage*." Yes, to take away *his* sinecure (for he long has had one) would be "confiscation, desolation, "and carnage!" And to enquire what is become of the revenue of that immense property, called "Crown Lands," would, I suppose, also be "confiscation, desolation, and car- "nage!" Indeed, the Sinecures are the *touch-stone*, together with the *Pensions* and *grants*, of which we shall speak by-and-by; for these are the oil that sets and keeps all the wheels of the System in motion; and they form, besides, the great bridle in the mouth of those, who are very impatient under the dominating riches of the *Fundholders*, to whom they would gladly give a check; but they well know, that it is impossible to touch the Fundholder without first stripping themselves of the Sinecures, Pensions, and Grants. This is the cement which holds the two together. And, besides, the STAFF of the army, swallows up an immensity of money; and, let any one look into the *List* of that Staff; and he will there find who it is that really receives and pockets this immense sum.

The COURIER says, that it would be *confiscation* to take people's *Salaries* and *fees* from them, and of course, to put them out of their "*offices*." Now, it is not thought confiscation to take away the pay of soldiers or of sailors and midshipmen, when their services are no longer *wanted;* but, it would be confiscation to take away the pay of those, who fill offices, to which no *duty* and no *danger* are attached! This pay is, with the COURIER, as sacred as "*Church Property*." And, according to him it is a great deal more sacred; for, part of the Church Property has been taken away and applied to the payment of the Fundholders by what is called *the redemption of the Land Tax*, in virtue of which part of the Church Property was sold, and the amount paid over to the government. Nay; the Parliament have passed Acts to compel the possessors of Church Livings to make such and such allowances to *Curates*, not only in money, but in the occupancy of parsonage Houses and Glebes. Now, this was an outrageous violation of the Property of those who owned Livings, or who possessed them for life; or, it showed that the Parliament regarded this Property as *public* property, over which it had an absolute controul; for, if it could dis-

pose of *a part*, it could dispose of *the whole* of this property; and, if it could dispose of it in one way, it could dispose of it in another way. Nay, at this very moment, the Parliament has before it a proposition for enabling the present possessors of Church Livings *to bind their successors in the leasing of the very tithes*, a project which *must* produce the total alienation of such property; for, who ever heard of a stoop of good liquor being forsaken as long as there was a drop of it left? This is a tap, which the Fundholders (who all abuse the rich Parsons) have long wished to see set a-running; and though I greatly prefer these latter to an insolent, ignorant, upstart aristocracy of Paper-Money, I must confess, that their recent conduct towards the Reformers, who prayed for nothing from the Parliament which the Parsons ought not to have prayed for in their churches, makes me anticipate their fate without any feeling of sorrow or compassion.

Therefore, supposing the Sinecures of Rose, Steel, Canning, Wm. Gifford, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Sidmouth's son, Mr. Charles Yorke, Lord Grenville, Mr. Villiers, Mr. Thomas Grenville, and the rest of them to be *as sacred* as the property of the Church, here are plenty of proofs to shew, that it was not *too sacred* to be freely handled by the Parliament. But, as every man must see, it is quite a different thing; for, while the property of the Church consists of *Houses*, *Lands*, *Trees*, and of a *Charge upon the Land*, under the name of *Tythes;* while this property is all of a visible and permanent nature; while it is subject to none of the vicissitudes of finance; while its tenure goes back to the remotest ages of civilization in England and Ireland; the Sinecure Places have arisen from the mere pleasure of Princes and Ministers; and, have, as to *services* or *duties*, become, from time to time, *wholly obsolete*, which cannot, at any rate, be said of the Church. And, while the Church has its income arising from the *land* directly, with ample powers of distraint in cases of House and Land, and of taking in kind in cases of Tythe; while its property consists of Lordships of Manors, of other real estates, and of a part of the produce of other estates, collected by means the most regular, efficient and certain, the income of the Sinecure Gentlemen, *arises out of the taxes*, which may, or may not (as is the case at present,) yield a sufficient sum to pay these gentlemen, without leaving some other department of expence, or debt, unsatisfied; unless, indeed, the Sinecure Gentlemen pretend (which, now I think of it, they do,) that *their* claim on the taxes is *prior* to that of the *Fundholders*; and that, too, upon the principle, that every thing else must give way to the salvation of a nation, and that their quiet enjoyment of their incomes is absolutely necessary to the salvation of England, Scotland and Ireland!

What! Is *the resuming of a grant* an act of "*confiscation?*" How many acts of confiscation have, then, been committed by the Parliaments of England! How many acts of "confiscation" could I find and produce, if I could once get to *any bar* to plead the cause of the nation against the COURIER! And yet, at a moment like this, when the tax-payers are in

such a state, that money is borrowed on Exchequer Bills to enable the parishes to keep the Labouring Classes from real starvation, these gentlemen put forward their claim to a portion of the taxes upon the ground of *indefeasible right!* Surely, before *many years* are over their heads, they will relax a little in this their claim!

Having now seen, that *no abolition* is even intended to take place, during the PRESENT GENERATION, let us next enquire a little into the AMOUNT of the *Sinecures*. The COURIER asserts, that they amount to ONLY *one hundred thousand pounds a year;* and, says he, "what an expo-" sure this is of the *base exaggerations* " of the Jacobin Reformers!"

Now, I do not know, that any Reformer ever *said*, that the *Sinecures* amounted to more than this sum. We never talked of Sinecures *alone*, but, as will be seen, in the foregoing extracts from the Hampshire Petition, we complained of "*Sinecures, Pen-* " *sions* and *Grants*, not *fully* merited " by *Well-known* public services;" and, we never pretended, that the whole together amounted, in *themselves*, to a very large sum, *compared with the whole of the enormous expenditure;* but, we said, that they were the *cause* of a very large portion of that expenditure, while they formed, in themselves, no small sum.

However, I will first shew, that, if it be *true*, that the Committee have recommended to abolish, in the *next generation*, only such sinecures as amount to 100,000 pounds per annum, even the *next generation* will have to pay the far greater part of the Sinecures, of which we complained. I shall here, in the first instance, include that of LORD CAMDEN, because his Lordship, though a very "*bright* " *star*," as WILBERFORCE called him, did not drop from the firmament, did not dart away from that effulgent constellation, in which Lord Arden, the Wellesleys, Wm. Gifford, Canning, and the rest shine with such brilliancy, 'till *after a million and a half of Reformers* had called aloud for the extinguishing of the whole of these luminaries. Therefore, in my first view of this matter, I shall include his Lordship's neat little sum, which was one, at least, of the things, which we cried out against. Nor, must I, for *this time*, omit the late Marquis of Buckingham; for, it was for years, that we put that Most Noble person at the head of our list; and, who knows, that our complaints on that head, did not prevent the giving of his pay to a successor? The document to which I shall refer, is an account, laid before the House of Commons in 1808, on *the motion* of *LORD COCHRANE*, who, from that day to this, has been an object of the deadly hatred of the basest and most implacable of his country's enemies. However, the Account was *printed*, by order of the House; and, though I am fully convinced, that all the sums are stated *as low as possible*, I will take the sums as I find them in this official document, presented by PERCEVAL himself, and ordered to be printed by the House, who have *not had any such account published since that time*, and who, I dare say, will *never do the like again.* In this account the names and sums of the following Sinecures are to be found,

and thus they stood, of course, before the Marquis of Buckingham's death, in 1814.

	Pounds a year
Lord Arden's	38,574
Mr. Garnier's	12,158
Earl of Buckinghamshire's	11,094
Hon. Thomas Knox and V. Knox	10,023
Marquis of Buckingham's	23,093
Marquis Camden's	23,117
	118,059

Thus, then, in 1814, these *six* Sinecures amounted to more than the 100,000 pounds. LORD CAMDEN surrendered his, or, at least, the greater part of it, in February last, *after* all our "clamour" as it is called; and, therefore, I must include it in my next statement.

	Pounds a year.
Marquis Camden's	23,117
Hon. T. Knox and V. Knox's	10,023
Lord Arden's	38,574
Mr. Garnier's	12,158
Earl of Buckinghamshire's	11,094
Lord Henry and Lord Robert Seymour	12,511
	107,477

Thus, then, these *six* Sinecures amounted to more than the 100,000 pounds a year of the Courier. But, let us see WHAT WE HAVE LEFT; and, whether we cannot still muster the 100,000 pounds a year, without going very far.

	Pounds a year.
Hon. T. and V. Knox's	10,023
Lord Arden's	38,574
Mr. Garnier's	12,158
Earl of Buckinghamshire's	11,094
Lord H. and Lord R. Seymour's	12,511
Lord Ellenborough's	7,591
Hon. S. Kenyon (Lord Kenyon's brother)	4,986
John Ley	8,010
Thomas Thurlow	5,720
Marquis Wellesley and W. Pole	4,201
	114,868

Here, then, I have proved to you, the Laborious Classes, that either the COURIER has published an atrocious falshood, or, that the Committee do not recommend enough to be done *even for the next generation*. But, I must not stop here. The impudence of this statement of the COURIER (who has no *prompters* of course), is not yet half exposed. We see, that there are during the whole of this generation to be *ten* Sinecures left, which amount to more than the 100,000 pounds a year; but, if the COURIER speaks truth, *all the rest* are to remain even *after* this generation shall all be in their graves And, *what is* that *rest*, think you? Why, they amount, in *England*, *Ireland*, and *Scotland*, leaving out *the colonies*, of which we shall speak by-and-by, to more than *a hundred* Sinecure places, and the whole sum they amount to exceeds *a hundred and fifty thousand pounds* a year! So that, together with those stated to be still in existence, as above, the whole annual sum, which the nation has to pay on this account during the *present generation* is more than two hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year; and, during *future generations* to more than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year! And yet this impudent hireling, while he tells us, that the taking off of 100,000 pounds a year *in the next generation* is all that this Committee, with the utmost degree of "*sincerity*, *energy*, and *expedition*," have been able to accomplish, he bids the people look upon this as "a *sweeping* "abolition of Sinecures, as *complete* as "the most zealous Reformers can *wish*"!

Thus, then, I have already fulfilled my promise, and have stripped this de-

ception stark naked. But, we are still only BEGINNING the exposure. We are only upon the threshold of this immense and dark labyrinth; and, with Mr. COURIER's permission (for he is the dog that guards the den) we will walk in, taking the torch of truth in our hands, and poking our heads into every hole and corner. I am aware, that we shall be accused of ill-manners for doing this; I am aware, that the COURIER will call us a Swinish Multitude, and will say, that it is a shame for such fellows to break in upon the privacy of so many delicate ladies and gentlemen, of all ages, some of them tottering on the verge of the grave, and others coming into their teens. I am aware, that there are others, who will call you *poor deluded creatures*, and me a designing, artful spreader of "*poison*" and "*venom*". But, in spite of all this, in I mean to walk; and, if you are disposed to follow me, come on!

An account of our discoveries will be given in my next. In the mean while I remain most sincerely your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

23d June, 1817.

P. Script.—Since my last but one, in which I noticed the loan, intended to be made to the parishes, I have received a news-paper, containing a little more information upon this subject than I then possessed. In this paper, I find the following statement: "*Em-*
"*ployment of the Poor.*—In the House
" of Commons on Monday night, the
" Chancellor of the Exchequer brought
" forward his plan for the employ-
" ment of the poor. The sums pro-
" posed to be voted are, for England,
" 1,500,000l. in Exchequer Bills;
" and for Ireland, 250,000l. out of the
" Consolidated Fund of that kingdom.
" Commissioners are to be appointed,
" who are to be empowered to advance
" loans to Corporations and other
" Bodies, for the purpose of making
" Harbours or Canals, or to Trustees
" of Roads, or to any persons engaged
" in public works now in progress or
" about to undertake them. Advances
" are to be made on the security of
" poor rates in England. No advance
" to be made to any parish except in
" cases in which the rate was *double*
" *the average of the two preceding*
" *years*. Manufacturers of Birming-
" ham and other places to be assisted
" with loans. The 250,000*l.* to be
" voted for Ireland is to be employed
" in the completion of public works or
" the encouragement of the fisheries.
" The Exchequer Bills to be payable
" in the year 1820. Security to be
" taken for the payment of the several
" advances by instalments, so that the
" whole shall be repaid by the time
" the Exchequer Bills become payable
" by the State. However, if it be
" deemed expedient to allow a further
" time, the Commissioners are to be
" empowered to extend it for six or
" seven years from the period of mak-
" ing the loan. The interest on the
" advances is to be five per cent. The
" Exchequer Bills bear an interest only
" of 3 1-4 per cent. The difference
" therefore, between 3 1-4 and 5 per
" cent. is intended to defray the ex-
" pences of the Commissioners, and
" the other charges attending the loan.
" In case of any failure in payment,
" the Crown is not to have priority

"over any other creditor, except with "the consent of the creditors themselves. The resolutions proposed "were agreed to and are to be taken "into further consideration on Friday, "when a bill, embodying the details of "the plan will be introduced. *It was "generally agreed that the utmost "possible dispatch should be used.* "The objections to the measure were, "that the encouragement to prosecute "public works would tend further to "depress the price of land; that it "would be better to advance money "for the cultivation of the waste lands, "and the promoting the inland navigation of the country; that the Manufacturers did not want capital, but "markets; that the advance of money "would not find them markets; that "with respect to the Poors' Rates, the "relief to be afforded was in cases "where the rates had become so high "as to be nearly bankrupt. What "valid *security* then could they give "for repayment of loans. But those "objections," the Courier says, "whatever *weight* may be in them, "*fades away before the necessity of the "case.* Distress is occasioned by the "want of employment for the poor. "The plan tends to relieve that distress "in the best possible way, by furnishing employment. The relief afford"ed *may not extend to all cases*; but "do not let us, because we cannot apply a complete and perfect remedy, "*reject a partial one.*"

Pray mark these concluding words! What, then, the "necessity of the case" is so pressing, that objections of *weight* "all *fade away before it.*" This necessity must be CANNING's "Glorious *Sun,*" to be sure? For its powers of *fading* appear to be seriously great. It is generally in the nature of the rays of the Sun to *vivify* and *cheer;* but this Sun of CANNING and STEWART, withers things up. But, if you remember, these persons, and the like of them, the GIFFORDS, the SOUTHEYS, and all the tribe, charged us with *exaggerating* the distress. They said, that we *invented* stories of woe. They said, that we represented the country as ruined, because we *wished* it to be so, and not because it *was* so. And, they themselves now say, that this scheme, however *objectionable*, must be adopted on account of the pressing *necessity* of the case. "It was generally agreed, that the "*utmost possible dispatch* should be "used." Bless us! They are in a terrible haste! They were *slower* in their movements some time back.

My good, suffering countrymen; you, whose kind wishes do, I am sure, follow me in my retreat from before the Warrants of Castlereagh and Sidmouth; you will not need to hear repeated, in this place, all, or any of, my *predictions*, relative to this subject. You will recollect, that, for the last 13 years, I have foretold, that ruin to the nation must be the result of pursuing the present system. At the very time, when the deluded (*really* deluded) people were induced to rejoice at the success over Napoleon; when the roasting of Oxen, the ringing of Bells, the Fêtes in the Parks, and all the other delusions were going on; I *then*, in the midst of all that, called upon my countrymen to prepare for days of most terrible calamity and misery. I, *then*, told them, that the price of the restoration of the Bour-

bons would be the destruction of liberty and of happiness in England. In 1814, in February, I went to Mr. WARING's, at Pear-Tree Green, near Southampton, to look at his Drilling-Machine; and, being invited into the parlour, where the ladies were at breakfast, one of them asked me, whether I did not believe, that Napoleon would soon be put down. I said, I did not know what to *think*, but, that I *hoped* he would not. "Lord! Mr. "Cobbett!" they all exclaimed, "*Why* "do you hope so?" "Because," said I, "I do not wish GEORGE ROSE to "have *his foot upon my neck*: it is quite "enough in all conscience for him to "have his hand in my pocket." "But," said Mr. WARING, "how "would the fall of NAPOLEON tend to "bring ROSE's foot upon your neck?" "You will *see*," replied I, "if that "fall should take place." If Mr. WARING should read this Register, he will remember that conversation, and will be able to judge, whether the prediction be, or be not, now fulfilled, except, indeed, that a local change has put my neck beyond the reach of George's foot.

When Napoleon was finally in the fangs of his enemies, did I join in the exultation? No: I said, that the *reckoning remained to be paid*, "the "*dreadful account* remained to be set-"tled," and that *miseries unnumbered* were in store for those, who were then drunk with joy at their fancied success! This very hireling slave, the owner of the COURIER, exclaimed, when he gave the account of Napoleon's capture, or, rather, of his surrender, "The *play is over!* We may "now *sit down to supper!*" "No!" said I, "we cannot sit down to sup-"per *yet:* we have not paid the ex-"pences of the play: we have no mo-"ney for a supper: our heads are "turned with *glory:* but our bellies "and our hearts will have to be "pinched and wrung for years, and "years yet to come."

In the face of all the boastings and all the delusions of the last five years, I have continued to predict ruin and misery. I have, over and over again, detailed the causes, and described the effects that would arise from those causes; and, I have all along said, that, at last, the several ranks of the people would be pressed down one upon another, "'till, in the end, there "would be *no means left of feeding the* "*poor out of the rates.*" Would it not have been better, then, for the Parliament to have listened to my *advice* than to have armed SIDMOUTH and CASTLEREAGH with warrants to put people into prison at their pleasure? I told Mr. VANSITTART, long and long ago, that *his* situation was very different from that of Mr. PITT in 1794; that the "*suspension of the Habeas Corpus* "would *now* give no assistance, seeing "that it was *misery*, and not *sedition*, "or pretended sedition, that *he* had to "contend with." I said this in *print* more than *two years ago;* for even then I expected *all*, yea *all*, that has come to pass. On the night, when the village of Botley was *illuminated* and the windows decorated with laurel, and while I was sitting in my parlour in a more serious mood than I have hardly ever been in at any other hour of my life, my wife endeavoured to cheer me up by observing, that the people would, in time, see their er-

ror: "Yes," said I, "but they will "see it when it will be too late. "Great and terrible sufferings will "be brought upon this nation; for, "rely upon it, that when the system "comes into its last agonies, *it will* "*make most desperate struggles.*"

Well, my kind-hearted countrymen, on whose indulgence I rely upon this occasion, all my forebodings and foretellings have been verified to the very letter. *There is the System!* Look at it! Is it, or is it not, in its *last agonies?* And, does it not make desperate struggles and plunges? It has got Power-of-Imprisonment Bills; it has got new treason Bills; it has got Sedition Bills; it has got new checks on the press. But, as I have a thousand times told the Old Crazy Thing, these will not enable it to *pay the Fundholders*, or *to feed the Poor*. And, we now see the Crazy Thing, talking by its oracle, the COURIER, about *borrowing money* to be lent to help to feed the Poor, while those very Poor are invited to put their *surplus* earnings into *Saving Banks!* We see the Crazy Thing proposing to lend money to add to the quantity of manufactures, while one immediate cause of the misery is, that there is no sale for one half of the manufactures now made. We see it proposing to lend money to encourage the fisheries to add to the quantity of human food, while it has a Bill to keep up the price of corn, the cheapness of corn having, as the Crazy Thing asserted, been the cause of temporary distress. We hear it now complaining of a *surplus population*, while, only last year, it complained of a *surplus of food*, and while, only five years ago, it cited the increase of the population as an *undeniable proof* of the increased prosperity and wealth and power of the country.

But, amidst all this crazy work, there peeps out a fact, sufficient, one would think, to stun even a mad creature into its senses; and, that is, that, though a million and a half of pounds are to go to assist the parishes in Great Britain, none of it is to be advanced to any parish, the poor-rates in which have not, during the last year, amounted to DOUBLE *the average amount of the rates of the two preceding years!* So that, if the misery fall short of double the quantity of the misery of either of the two last years, it is not yet enough to call for relief!

Can such a state of things last? The very hirelings themselves say, "no." But, they hold out hopes, that things will *come about!* So they did *last year;* so they did the *year before;* and so they will *next year*, even though they should be unable to shew how another meal for the Poor is to be purchased; and though the "*sudden transition* from war to peace" will then no longer serve their turn, even with the base ideots, whose last acre is now sliding away from under them.

Why, *America* had a very sudden transition from war to peace; much more sudden than we had. And, why is there *no misery here?* Here I pay a day-labouring man a *dollar*, in silver, for his day's work, and give him a quart of cider that cannot be bought in England for *a shilling*. And this man buys his veal and mutton and pork, at *five pence* a *pound*, English money. The very same English *salt*, for which you give 20 shil-

lings, English, a bushel, he buys for three English shillings a bushel. Soap candles, sugar, tea, tobacco, all for about *two-thirds* of the price that you pay for them of the same quality. I have never yet seen, or heard of, a *pauper* or a *beggar* since I have been here. The cause of this, is, that, *here* the taxes are so light, that the people who raise the good things of the world have their full share of the enjoyment of them. Why do you pay 20*s.* for a bushel of that very same salt that the men here pay only 3*s.* for? It is *made in England*, and the people here have to pay all the expences of bringing it here. But, then, there is a *salt-tax* for you to pay, which amounts to a *million and a half of pounds a year?* This, my friends, is the cause of your miseries; this *Taxing Work*; and not "a sud-"den transition from war to peace," as the sons and daughters of corruption would have you believe; and, never, 'till a Reformed Parliament has the guardianship of the nation's purse will you know one day of happiness. Persevere in your principles, and that day is at no great distance. Let your enemies work on. They are safe in the mire. The more they plunge, the deeper they will get. The exposure of them, so long as I am able to use a pen shall have no limit in its circulation but the limit of the English Language. The hirelings affected to *laugh* at my promise to revive my labours. This day ends, however, only the *seventh* week since I landed in America, and this very day I send off to England, my *seventh* Register, having sent off six before, and having published four out of the seven at New York, word for word, as I send them off to England.

I had nearly forgotten one point, which is of very material consequence. When we said, that the *Soup-Kettle* was not the way to provide for the Labouring Classes; but, that they should not be taxed so heavily, and then they would be able to provide for themselves out of their own earnings; the hirelings of the press turned round upon us, and called us *inhuman* fellows, who did not like to see the people *relieved*. So now, I dare say, they will pretend, that this *million and a half* to be lent to the parishes is a mere *gift* from the Parliament; and an act of "*enlightened benevolence;*" a work of pure charity performed by the Ministers and the rest of the Lords and Gentlemen. Do not believe the hirelings for one moment. It i sa million and a half of *the taxes*, which you and others have paid on your salt, soap, beer, candles, sugar, tea and other things. It is your *own money* lent to you; and, therefore, though it is nonsense to suppose, that you will ever pay it back, there will be no harm done in that. Yet you will hear all the hirelings crying up this loan as a proof of the *kindness* and *tenderness* of the Ministers towards the people; as a proof of their great and constant care of the people's welfare! Their tenderness for you has, within the last six months, been shown in so many, and in such strong lights, however, that you can hardly misunderstand it; and therefore, confiding in your good sense, public spirit, and *real* loyalty, I leave this *tenderness* to be judged of by yourselves; and remain always your faithful friend

Wm. Cobbett.

Next week, A Peep into the Den.

Errors in No. 19.

In page 615, line 2 from the botton, for "*listen me,*" read *listen to me.* In page 623, line 4 from the bottom, for "*man*" read *men.*

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

673] LONDON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 1817. [674

A

PEEP INTO THE DEN

OF

SINECURES, PENSIONS, AND GRANTS.

ADDRESSED TO THE

LABOURING CLASSES IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND.

North Hampstead, Long Island, July 4th, 1817.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

Writing the date of this Letter puts me in mind of the circumstance, that this day is the only one which is celebrated as a festival by the People of this country. It was on the 4th of July, that they declared themselves independent of England. They succeeded in establishing that Independence, after a long and arduous struggle against the English fleets and armies, and against the Brunswickers, Hessians, and other German Troops, hired by our Government of the German Princes. The ground of that memorable quarrel was, that the government wanted to *tax* the Americans *without letting them send Members to Parliament.* Upon this ground the people here *resisted;* and, in the House of Lords, LORD CHATHAM, the father of Pitt, said, that they had "a *right* to resist," and that he "*rejoiced* that they *had* "*resisted.*" This Revolution, which has led to such mighty consequences in the world, and which was the first great blow given to Despotism and Superstition, was built upon the foundation: that *he who is taxed without his own consent is a slave.* He may *call* himself what he will; but, if he has *no voice* in the making of the laws, by which he is liable to be punished, and by which his property is taken away and applied to the use of others, he is, to all intents and purposes, *a slave.*

Bearing in our recollection these eternal principles, to state which, in this place, I have been led by the date of this Letter, we will now proceed to take a *Peep*, at least, into the Den. To go into every hole and corner of it was my intention; but, I am afraid that we shall not have time, without omitting to notice other things of still greater importance, which must soon press forward and demand our immediate attention; for, our *news* from England is now very *old*, being no later than the *4th of May*, something very extraordinary, and it leads some persons to believe, that the THING (whatever it be now called) has, for

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some pressing reason, resorted to an *Embargo*. I am not one of those who think this. The *time* is not yet come for such measures. Let us see another year over our heads first, and then, if no good and effectual measures be adopted, we may expect news that will make even the agents of Castlereagh prick up their ears. To digress a little further, I see, that Mr. GARROW is stated to be *promoted* from ATTORNEY-GENERAL to be a PUISNE *Baron of the Exchequer*. This is what never took place before, within the memory of man, except in the case of Gibbs, when *a total change of ministry* was expected. But, coolly and quietly and *by choice* to quit the post of Attorney-General to become a *Puisné* Judge, is quite astonishing. SHEPHERD, it seems, is the new Attorney-General. Now, whether Sir WM. GARROW, like the Irish Witness, thought *he had done quite enough*; or whether a more able and more sturdy hand was wanted in his place to perform the *remaining work*, are questions that I cannot determine. But, I have remarked, that, when the COURIER has had any of *its* praises to bestow on the acts of the Law Officers, it has mentioned *only* Sir Samuel Shepherd. It was *Sir Samuel Shepherd's opinion*, that my son owed 80,000 pounds to the Stamp Office! It was Sir Samuel Shepherd, we were told, who was Lord Sidmouth's great *law-authority* for his Circular Mandate to the Magistrates. And, really, I am disposed to believe, that SIR WILLIAM GARROW was not quite quick enough at *discovering law* to suit the present times and circumstances. However, a short time will make this matter clear to me; for as soon as I get my files of COURIERS, I shall see what has been the real cause of this change, so unexpected, and so unusual.

In coming now to the proposed subject of this Letter, you will bear in mind, my friends, that the COURIER had told us, that the Finance Committee had *abolished all the Sinecures!* That they all did not amount to more than 100,000 pounds a year. But, that, the fact is, *none are abolished*; that all the holders are to hold them *for life*; and, that, as many of them are settled *in reversion*, that is to say, upon the sons, daughters, or other successors, of the present holders, and as none of these *interests* are to be *affected by the report*, these latter may continue for *a hundred years to come*; and this is what the COURIER called "a *sweeping* abolition, as com-"plete as any Reformer can wish!" We must bear in mind, too, that, even *after a hundred years*, a very great part of the sinecures will remain, if only 100,000 pounds a year be to be abolished at that time, in consequence of this Report.

But this famous Report does *not touch* the Sinecures *in the Colonies!* And, why not? Why not touch them? Are not they paid by the nation? Do not the people of England pay for fleets and armies to defend those

colonies? Do not the people pay a tax on every thing that comes from those colonies? Yes, and the people of America, who pay for no fleets and armies to defend those colonies, are supplied with sugar, coffee and rum, *cheaper* than the people of England are by more than one third. The truth is, that the Sinecures in the Colonies are paid by the People at home just as much as the Sinecures at home are; and *why* they were omitted by the Committee in their "*Sweeping*" Report it may remain for the COURIER to tell us. In the mean while we will proceed with our inquiry.

The Sinecures in the Colonies amount to 76,546 pounds a year, exclusive of those in the Cape of Good Hope, the Isle of France, and Malta, which, probably amount to as much more; for, many of the Noble Lords and their sons and a great many of the Right Hon. and Hon. Gentlemen fill the offices of *Clerks*, *Harbour-Masters*, *Naval-Officers*, *Tide-Waiters*, *Collectors*, *Surveyors*, &c. &c. in those countries, which countries they have never seen, except upon the map, if they have seen them even there. Some of these offices are filled by *women*, and by *fine Ladies* too; and some by *children*; but, then, these children are of high *blood*, and, of course, they have extraordinary faculties.

Without going an inch further, then, we have Sinecures to the amount of 400,000 a year. But, was it Sinecures *alone* that we complained of? No: we complained of "Sinecures, "*Pensions* and *Grants*, not *fully me-* "*rited* by *well-known* public services." Now of *Pensions* and *Grants*, there are in the official account before me, *Eleven hundred and nine names*, receiving in the whole, 642,621 pounds a year! And, observe well, that I have not included here one single person, who has any pretension to *public merit of any kind whatsoever*, except the "*Late foreign Ministers*," and it is very clear that they *ought* to have *no pensions at all*. They are paid enormous salaries while in service; their expences going and coming are all paid; they have an enormous *service of plate* as an out-fit, which they *keep*; and, when they have finished their employment, what right have they to any thing more? When a man has served his master for a year, or for 20 years, does not the master cease to pay him as soon as he ceases to work? When a war is over are not the soldiers sent way without any pay for the rest of their lives, except in the case of *wounds*, and what *foreign minister* gets wounded? The officers of the army have, indeed, *half-pay*, but, then, they have *bought* their commissions; and, besides, they have been in the service so long that they are capable of being in no other sort of employ; and, in the navy, they are actually bred up to the business from their infancy. Why, then, these immense sums to the late foreign Ministers, whose bodies are as strong,

and who can find employment the same as before? Besides, no other nation wastes its means in this way. The American foreign Ministers receive, while on service, each of them about *a fifth part* as much per year as Canning received per year while he was at Lisbon, and they receive *no pensions* after their employment ceases. But, then, the American people have not the satisfaction to see such men as Canning rolling in his chariot, while they eat grains and butter-milk! The American People have not the honour to pay 20*s.* a bushel for English salt; but, on the contrary, I now actually pay 2*s.* 6*d.* English money for *that very salt*, for which I used to give 20*s.* a bushel in London, and 19*s.* a bushel at Botley. People here give salt to their *cattle* in great abundance and to surprising advantage; they take their hay in sometimes almost green, and throw salt amongst it, which makes it, they say, as good as hay made in the general way. Yet this very salt comes from England, yea, is made in that same England, where a poor man can hardly get salt to use with his potatoes! But, then, the Americans, as I said before, have not the honour to have Sinecure Place-men, Big Pensioners, Great Grantees, and and a long list of "Late Foreign Ministers," though the foreign affairs of the country are conducted with more ability than those of any other nation in the whole world. As a proof of this, compare the public papers of the American Foreign Ministers with the papers of Castlereagh, Canning, Wellesley, or any of the rest of them. Besides, the American Foreign Ministers are always amongst the very first men in the country for talent, wisdom, and integrity. Of the FIVE PRESIDENTS, *three* have formerly been Foreign Ministers. And, it is to men like these that the Americans give about a *fifth part* as much as we give to such men as CANNING and FRERE! But, then, the People of America do not live upon butter-milk and grains; nor do they live upon tea and potatoes.

If, indeed, our Foreign Ministers were to serve 'till they were *worn-out*, as a soldier or sailor must (if not wounded) in order to get a pension, the evil would not be so great; because it is clear, that we never could have above *one* or *two* at a time of these gentlemen to keep. But, the fact is just the contrary. Our foreign Ministers serve only *two or three years*, and then home they come and have a pension *for life*; and, indeed, it is perfectly notorious, that the younger sons of those who have seats, are thus sent abroad to stay two or three years in order *to be fastened upon the nation for life!* So that there is always a long list of these "*Late foreign Ministers*"; and, in the account before me, there are no less than *forty seven* of these persons, receiving 51,589 pounds a year out of the earn-

ings of the people, who are in the deepest misery for want of food and clothing! There was one of the WYNNES sent to Dresden for *four years*, from 1803 to 1807, for which he has ever since been receiving a pension of 1,200 pounds a year! This is HENRY WATKIN WILLIAMS WYNNE. Not "*Squeeking* WYNNE", but a brother of his, and brother also to *Sir Watkin*, who is so famed for the *loyalty*, with which he is said to have been inspired, during the last war. Faith! this loyalty was no such foolish thing for Sir WATKIN's family! There are people, who *laugh* at these Wynnes; but, the Wynnes might, with much more reason, laugh at them. This grave Embassador was about twenty one years of age, when he went to Dresden. He is, of course, now about thirty five; and, if the system were to go on, 'till he were three score and ten years old, he would receive 47,600 pounds in *principal* money; and, if we were to reckon, as we *ought*, the *interest* and compound interest, he would receive 155,400 pounds, for his four years of service at Dresden! Besides a thumping *salary* while he was there! This is no visionary idea, for in the same list, there is a JOHN OSBORNE, a relation of the Duke of Leeds, who was envoy at this same petty Court of Dresden *four years* from 1771 to 1775, and he received a pension of 800 pounds a year up to 1808 (the date of the account now before me); so that, in 1808, this gentleman had received, in *principal money*, 26,400 pounds, besides his salary for four year's Envoyship, and, if he be alive now, he has received 33,600 pounds for the four years service. The interest and compound interest, which always *ought* to be reckoned in these cases, would make his sum surpass *a hundred thousand pounds* for four years envoyship at Dresden, besides his salary for the four years. I find a RICHARD SHEPHERD upon this list, who is our friend the great *law man's* son. This person was *Chargé d'affair at Munich* for *two years*, for which he has been receiving a pension of 250 pounds a year *for* 18 *years* already; and, if his father can find *law enough* to uphold the system, he may receive it, or a bigger pension, for 40 years longer, if so long he shall live!

It is farcical to pretend, that these pensions are given for *public services*. These are *able men*, or they are not; if they *are*, why not employ them instead of *new* ones. If they are *not*, how can they merit a pension as late foreign ministers? I think it would puzzle brother SHEPHERD himself to get clear of this dilemma.

No, no! The Reformers prayed for the abolition, and at *once*, too, of "all Sinecures, Pensions and Grants "not *fully merited* by *well-known* "public services;" and, of course, they prayed for the abolition of the expence of 51,589 pounds a year

amongst the other sums, paid annually to Pensioners and Grantees.

I have included in my above enumeration and statement not one name, not one sum, that comes fairly under the head of *real public services*. There may, indeed, be persons to differ from me in opinion as to what are *public services*, and what are not *public services*. These persons, such as the sublime and profound Lord MILTON, for instance, would probably contend, that the notorious BURKE's services were really of a public nature and of immense national benefit. Of course, he would think, that, though Burke got a pension of 3,000 pounds a year for his own life, and 1,200 pounds a year for the life of Mrs. Burke, and, *besides these*, a grant of 2,500 pounds a year for *five other lives*; of course, Lord MILTON would think, that public money *could not possibly be better laid out!* This last grant is a most *curious* thing. The pension for his own life and then one for Mrs. Burke's life after him are nothing *new*. It is no more than those provident gentlemen and good husbands, Messrs. Long, Huskisson, Nepean, King, and hundreds of others have done. But, to provide before hand a grant of public money *to be left to Executors at the Grantee's death*, is really something more shameless than I should have expected even the shameless Burke to ask; and, I leave the world to guess at the state of abject subjection, in which Mr. Pitt was, to the Boroughmongers, when he could give his consent to such a profligate grant, and that too, to the man, whom, of all men living, he despised the most. This Grant is so great a curiosity, that I will transcribe it word for word.

"Grant to *the Executors* of the "late EDMUND BURKE, annual "amount, 2,500 pounds. By autho- "rity of two patents, dated 24th "Oct. 1795. That is to say, 1,160 "pounds, during the life of Lord "Royston and the Hon. and Rev. "Anchild Grey. And, 1,340 pounds, "during the life of the Princess "Amelia, Lord Althorpe, and Wm. "Cavendish, Esq."

Now, whether a calculation of these lives were made and the Grant *sold*, as it might be, as soon as it was obtained; or, whether it really was bequeathed to "*Executors*," perhaps Lord MILTON the sublime, or Mr. WILLIAM ELLIOT the beautiful, may be able to tell; but, I rather more than believe, that it was my exposure of this vile transaction, in a Register of November last, which drew forth from the latter, in the month of January, those vehement charges against the publishers of "*Weekly Venom*;" and, at any rate, I am quite sure, that the nation *continues to pay* this 2,500 pounds a year *to somebody*, and that it will continue to pay it as long as Lord Milton and Mr. William Elliot shall have seats in Parliament.

What! And are there men in the

world, not notorious robbers, to *approve* of such things as these! "Ah!" says the COURIER, "but they are "*vested rights*; and, if you begin by "*seizing* them, you may end by *seizing* people's *goods in their houses.*" If this be all we want to authorise the *seizure*, we may seize away; for, how many thousand persons have had their beds sold from under them to *pay the taxes* since this grant was made! Thus the *beginning to seize* has actually taken place. But, *what* are we to *seize?* The grant is nothing in substance. We want to *seize* nothing. We only want not to be compelled to pay the amount of it any longer. We want to be able to live without Burke's Executors coming to seize our goods. We want not to be obliged to go naked and hungry in consequence of our earnings being taken away in this manner. And, because we complain, that 66,000 pounds of the money, raised in taxes upon our Beer, Soap, Candles, &c. have been given to this BURKE, are we to be called *Jacobins* and *Revolutionists?* He, his wife, and his executors have already received about sixty six thousand pounds of *principal money* out of the taxes, and, as the *lives* are some of them very young yet, the Executors may, possibly, receive as much more. If we reckon the *interest*, as we ought, this hireling writer; the trumpeter of that war, a "*transition from which* "*to peace*" has, upon the shewing of the Boroughmongers themselves, produced unparalleled misery throughout a whole nation; if we reckon the interest, this base man, who prostituted his great talents to the vilest and most wicked of purposes, will, in the whole, if the System go on, have received by himself and his executors, *a quarter of a million of the public money*; and, because we complain of this, we are to be held forth as promulgating *sedition* and *blasphemy!*

The late Marquis of Buckingham has not received less, from his Sinecure, than 700,000 pounds of principal money; the Marquis Camden 700,000; Lord Arden not less than 500,000; the Seymours not less than 400,000; Garnier not less than 250,000; the Knox's 400,000; Lord Hobart 400,000; the Dukes of Richmond, Grafton, Marquis Bute, Lord Melville, and others, each nearly half a million at least; and many, many others 200,000 and 100,000 each. Some 50,000, and so on; 'till if we take a view of the last 57 years, since His Majesty has been upon the throne, and take in all the *grants* of money, given *for no known public services*, we shall find *here* what it is that has swelled up what is called the *National Debt.* But, of this we will speak more at large by and by, when we have asked a little more about the *public services* of the persons, who receive the immense sums of money, of which we have been speaking.

Can any one imagine what public services were ever rendered by any

of the persons just named? And by the Marchioness of Stafford? Yet her Ladyship is down for 300 pounds a year, though her husband has scores of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands a year in his own estates. Lady Grenville, of course, being bone of bone and flesh of flesh with her Lord, has rendered what some people might call services; but have they not been pretty decently paid for in that husband's enormous *salaries*; and, in the 116,000 pounds of *principal money*, which he has received from his Sinecure as Auditor of the Exchequer? And, we are to be called *seditious* are we, because we complain of these things? We are to be muzzled and choaked, that these people may not even be disturbed by our cries! My God! And, is this *always* to go on? There is *Lady Augusta Murray*, now called *D'Amiland*, who was married at Rome to the Duke of Sussex. A very virtuous lady, I dare say; but, *what has she done* to merit 3,417 pounds a year out of the taxes. This lady has not received, in this way, less than 50,000 pounds of the public money, *principal* money; and, *for what?* Mrs. Huskisson is to have a pension after her husband's death; and, *for what?* He has a pension of 1,200 pounds a year for life, *when he is out of place*; so has LORD MINTO, and the *family* of this latter is all provided for out of the taxes. Now, what have *they* done to merit this of us who pay the taxes?

There is no end to these instances. Only think of CUMBERLAND, the *play-writer*, having had a *pension*, and his daughters now being upon the list of those, who live upon the sums which we pay on our beer, soap, &c. There are whole troops of *fine ladies*; whole families of children, of whose fathers we *never even heard*, who are kept out of the fruit of our labour. Let us take a few instances as they stand in the Account.

"Grant, by Warrant dated 20th May "1799 to W. Borrows, Esq. in "*trust* for Mary and Maria HUN, "during their lives and the survi- "vor of them, for 500 pounds a "a year."

These are the Mother and half-sister of CANNING. Great merit in *his* eyes perhaps; but, what have they done *for us?* Mrs. HUN, they say, was once a most excellent play-actress, and, doubtless, a very worthy woman; but, in the name of all that is false and corrupt, I ask what claim she has to the taxes that we pay upon our beer and candles and tea?

"Grant of 400 pounds a year to the "Reverend H. Hobart and Mr. "John Sullivan in *trust* for *five* "*children* of the late George Ho- "bart, Esq. during the lives of the "five children, and, after the death "of *four*, 200 a year for the survi- "vor."

"Pension to LORD FITZHARRIS, to "begin *at the death of his father*, "the Earl of Malmsbury." There is a *provident* young man!

" A grant in *trust* for
" Mary Anne Herries, a year, . £300
" Catherine Herries, ... 150
" Isabella Maria Herries, . . . 150
" Julia Mary Herries, ... 150
" Lady Louisa Paget, ... 300
" Same (Now Lady L. Erskine,) 300

This is a *sister* of the *Marquis of Anglesea.*

" A grant to Lord Sydney and the
" Reverend T. Selwyn in *trust*, for
" Charlotte Selwyn, a year £100
" Albina Frances Selwyn, . 100
" Maria Louisa Selwyn, . . 100
" Henrietta E. Selwyn, . . 100

These, I suppose, are the daughters of this Reverend Gentleman, who is a relation of Lord Sydney. They may be called *lucky* girls, indeed: and, certainly they have got very *pretty names;* but, let us come to *conscience* with the Reverend Gentleman, and ask him what *right* he has to fasten his four daughters upon *our backs?* What *justice* there is in taking away our bread and giving it to his daughters, while we are reduced to grains and potatoes? Whether he can find any precept for this in that Gospel, which he is so well paid for teaching? And, whether, while these things exist, it be not monstrously impudent in his brother MALTHUS, to pretend, that, to relieve the poor is to encourage population improperly, and that the *poor Labourers* have *no right* to relief for *their hungry children;* seeing, "that it is "*their own fault* if they have more chil-"dren than they can support out of their "own labour"! I should like to hear what brother SELWYN would say, if these questions were put *home* to him, as they, doubtless, will be one of these days. I dare say brother Selwyn is a *Magistrate*, and that he regards my Register as both *seditious* and *blasphemous.*

" Grant to
" Anna Maria, Duchess Dowager, of
Newcastle, a year . . £1,000
" Lady Sarah Napier, ... 368
" Louisa Mary Napier, . . . 162
" Emily Louisa Augusta Napier, 162
" Grant in *trust* to Sir George Os-
" born and John Ley, for
" Jane Wraxall, . . £400
" Grant to
" Sarah Pierson, ... £27
" Mary Pierson, ... 27
" Dianna Anne Pierson, . . . 27
" Frances Pierson, ... 27
" Reverend Thomas Pierson, . . 130

Here is another Reverend Gentleman's family quartered upon us for life!

" Grant to Robert Halifax and Cathe-
" rine Halifax, widow, in *trust* for
" Gertrude Halifax, a year . . £60
" Charlotte Halifax, ... 60
" Marianne Halifax, ... 60
" Caroline Halifax, ... 60
" Catherine Halifax, ... 60
" Elizabeth Halifax, ... 60

A pretty little snug covey, who take just as much as would maintain *twelve good Labourers and their families*, consisting of *sixty persons.* And, pray, Mr. MALTHUS, has not the *poor Labourer's children*, whose father has, all his life long, been paying taxes and raising food, as good a claim to relief as these

Halifaxes have? You, Sir, would *check the population of the Labouring People;* but you say not one word about *this* population. You say, that the *Labourer* has *no right* to demand relief out of the rates; and, that he should be told, that unless he can support his children, he should *take care not to have them.* Why do you not say the same to the Cumberlands, the Selwyns, the Napiers, the Piersons, the Hallifaxes, the Herrieses, the Ponsonbys, and hundreds upon hundreds of others! But, the truth is, that *the Labourer's earnings are taken in great part, away from him,* or he would, *as formerly,* stand in need of no relief, except in cases of accident.

"Grant to Charles Abbott and Lord
"Rendlesham, in *trust* for Eleanor
"*Madelaine Wickham,* per year
"£675

Now what has this good Lady done for us? Her husband is loaded with pensions besides. His exploits *at Basle,* indeed, may, by some, be deemed *services;* but what has this good woman done? Did she *assist* him in his operations at Basle?

And *why* should the *Baroness Cathcart* have 500 pounds a year? or *Catherine Popham* 200 a year? Or *Seizan De Meuron,* a foreigner (in the teeth of positive law) 393 pounds a year? Why should the *three* Misses *Barlow,* the two Ladies *Howard,* the three Misses *Harnage,* have pensions to be paid by us, who never heard of their names before? Why should *Erenstine Lawrensie* have 200 pounds of our money every year, except on account of her, or his, pretty foreign name; for, I really do not know whether it be the name of a woman or of a man?

"Pension to SIR LUKE WETTES-
"TEIN, in *trust* for Sir LUKE
"SCHAWB's *daughters,* per year,
"200 pounds."

These are *foreigners*: there can be no doubt of that. The Prince of MECKLENBURGH STRELITZ is in this list for 2,000 pounds a year. LA COMTESSE D'ALTON, 300 a year. There are many other foreigners on the Pension List. And yet, the Act of Parliament, in virtue of which the present family sit on the throne, declares in the most clear and most positive manner, that no one, who is not a NATURAL BORN subject of the king of England, shall hold a *pension,* or any place of *profit* or of *trust,* under the Crown. There is no *act of naturalization* which can remove this impediment; and yet, this great law, made, as its title imports, *for the preservation of our rights and liberties,* has been paid no more regard to by the Ministers than if it had been *an old ballad!* They violate it every day; they live in a continual violation of it. *They* talk of *illegal* practices, indeed! *They* bring men to punishment for violation of the laws! What, is there no punishment *for them,* then? Are they to violate the laws with *impunity;* and that, too, in the most bare-faced and most insolent manner? Are they *never* to be brought to justice; and, if we charge them with these violations of the laws;

nay, if we humbly complain, and pray that the violations may cease, are they *for ever* to charge us with *sedition* and *blasphemy* for so doing, and to ride off themselves with impunity? I take my facts from an official account, made out by the Ministers and laid before the Parliament. What audacity! What a contempt of the law, to dare to lay before the Parliament these numerous proofs of a gross violation of it! But, indeed, the Ministers knew well *who* it was that they were submitting this account to. They would have taken special care not to have laid such an account before a Parliament chosen by the people at large; and here it is that we see the *real reason* for all the opposition to a Reform.

There is a Mr. JOSEPH HUNT, who was, some years ago, obliged to *abscond* in consequence of a *misapplication of the public money;* that very man has two pensions, amounting to 1,037 pounds a year! And this is a reward for *public services!* "The RIGHT HON. THOS. STEEL" has his sinecure of 1,633 pounds a year, though he, too, was proved to have misapplied the public money, to give to his conduct the mildest of terms. Is not this a shame? And, are we to be crammed into dungeons if we complain of these things? We will complain of them; and, we will persevere, 'till we obtain *justice.*

The Hon. Robert C. Clements is a *Searcher and Packer* of the Ports in Ireland; Sir Richard Hardinge is *Surveyor General* of the Ports; Sir George Shee is *Receiver General;* Hon. Edw. Acheson is *Customer and Collector;* two of the notorious Beresfords are *Storekeepers;* John Beresford and James D. Beresford are *Wine-Tasters;* Lord Robt. Seymour is a *Craner and Wharfinger;* Earl Roden is another *Searcher;* Right Hon. Earl of Avonmore is another *Searcher and Packer;* the Earl of Donoughmore is another *Searcher and Packer;* Marquis of Drogheda and Mr. Bagwell are *Muster Master General.* All this is in Ireland, and fifty times as much more. It is notorious, that these people are no such thing as they are here called; but, they receive amongst them, on account of these pretended occupations, *fifteen thousand and two hundred pounds.* Mr. ABBOT, the Speaker, has, for many years, received 1,500 pounds a year for keeping the *Signet* in *Ireland,* where there is *no signet to be kept.* The WYNDHAMS, younger sons of the family of the Earl of Egremont, hold places in the Colonies that yield them nearly 20,000 pounds a year. And, *what for?* What have they ever done for the country, except to help to ruin it by voting for wars and loans? Is it *seditious,* is it *blasphemous,* to complain that a waste like this is made of the people's labour, and that these two Wyndhams spend of the nation's money as much every year as would keep *a thousand Labouring families,* amounting to four or five thousand persons? Is this blasphemous? It is indeed most horrid blasphemy to attempt to justify such wicked acts; and this is a sort of blasphemy that I hope yet to see punished.

However, let us get on a little with

our *broods* of Pensioners; for, it is very material to expose the atrocious falsehood, that these things have been given as rewards for *Public Services.*

" Grant, dated 1807, to James Earl
" of Lauderdale and others, in *trust*
" for

" Mary Turner Hay, per year, £100
" Dorothy Frances Hay, . . 100
" Hannah Charlotte Hay, . 100
" Elizabeth Hay 100
" Jane Hay 100
" Julian Hay 100

And the curiosity here is, that these pensions are to continue, till these ladies shall respectively *get them husbands!* or, *during pleasure!* So that they might last for fifty years; as they would, if the system lasted so long.

" Grant to Agnes Clerk Hay,
" per year £100
" Arthur Witham Hay . . 100
" Dorithia Judith Hay . . 100
" Maria Hay 100
" Lewis Hay 100
" Elizabeth Hay 100

These are to take effect when the *mother dies;* and she has a pension for life! So, thus are they fastened upon the nation from age to age!

" Grant to Elizabeth Cockburn,
" per year £50
" Matilda Cockburn . . . 50
" Margaret Cockburn . . . 50
" Ann Cockburn 50

These are to begin when the mother dies, who has a pension for life, and they are to cease at marriage, *unless his Majesty should otherwise please!*

" Grant to Marie Claudine Silphie
" Duchess Fitz James, 200 pounds
" a year, grant dated 22d Sept.
" 1806."

This is so very audacious a thing that one can hardly believe one's own eyes, 'till we see by the date, that it was the WHIGS, the precious Whigs, who committed this act of profligate violation of law. This person is not only a *Frenchwoman*, the wife of a *Frenchman*, but that Frenchman is a descendant, as his name imports, from that very *James the Second*, who was driven from the throne of England to make way for the present family! And this very Duke Fitz James's father had been one of the aiders and abettors of the *Pretender!* Where the honest Whigs, honest and faithful Whigs looked to discover the *Public Services*, which tempted them to this outrageous breach of the law, they will, perhaps, by and by, be induced to tell us.

My eye happening to drop upon Marie Claudine Silphie led me away from my *family parties;* and, it is useless to return to them, unless I had parson MALTHUS by the ear to ask him, at every moment, why he does not apply his arguments to these abominable lists of paupers in high life. He would deny relief to the Labourer, who is obliged to give away in taxes one half of what ought to go to support his family; but, he very quietly sees these swarms, who never have worked at all, receiving re-

lief out of those very taxes, more than three fourths of which the Labouring Classes pay!

One cannot help wondering at the *shamelessness* of Noblemen and Gentlemen in suffering themselves to be called Tide-Waiters, Harbour-Masters, Searchers, Packers, Craners, Clerks, Wharfingers, Prothonotaries, and the like; or, that such a man as Lord Charles Spencer, a brother of the Duke of Marlborough, should suffer himself to be stuck into the Pension List for 1,000 a year, when all the world knows, that he never performed the smallest quantity of public service in his life. There is a *Baroness* who is "*Sweeper* of the Mall in the "Park" for 340 pounds a year; but, what is out of nature as well as shameless, is, that the SISTERS of the Earl of NORTHINGTON are with him joint *Clerk of the Hanaper!*

At first, when I looked over these Lists (for there are forty-seven separate lists) I wondered *who the people could be.* The *Brudenels*, the Seymours, the Talbots, the Herberts, Finches, Wyndhams, Hays, Cockburns, Selwyns, &c. &c. But, upon closer examination, I found the far greater part of all these broods of pensioners belonging, in one way or another, to the great families; or, in other words, to the Boroughmongers, and those dependent upon them. It is true, that Lord Fitzwilliam and his son have no places or pensions; but, BURKE, their grand tool, took a fine bite out of our flesh. In short, we have only to look at the immense sums of public money, which are expended in this way, and observe well *who it is* that really has the disposing of these sums, to make us cease to wonder at the desperate deeds which are resorted to in order to prevent such a Reform as would enable the people, by their real representatives, to superintend the expending of the public money.

But, though the amount of the Sinecures, Pensions and Grants, merited by no public service whatever, is enormous, these form only a part of what the Borough families receive out of the taxes. The *fat* things of that great gulph of expence, *the Army*, are *almost wholly theirs.* The post of *Colonel of a Regiment* is a sinecure in fact; and, if you look into the List, you will not find *twenty* out of nearly *two hundred*, which are not in the hands of the Borough families. So it is with the *Staff.* So it is as to those enormous Sinecures, the *Governorships* of fortresses, castles, islands, provinces, &c. &c. which amount to immense sums; and, indeed, if you consider how small a portion of the money voted for the army really is wanted for the *soldiers*, you must see how this multitude of millions have gone, and how they still go, and must go, as long as the system goes on unreformed.

Now, my friends (first pulling off our hats), let us just peep into the Church, for there are some very good things there. There are three enormously rich Bishopricks, Canterbury, Durham, and Winchester, the revenues and the livings to be given in which are worth, proba-

bly, 150,000 pounds a year. The first of these is held by a *Cousin of the Duke of Rutland;* the second by the *Uncle of Viscount Barrington;* and the third by the *Uncle of the Earl of Guildford.* Then out of the rest, *twelve* are held by the the relations of great Noble Boroughmen; so that, out of the 26 in *Number*, there are 15 in the hands of real *blood relations* of Borough owners, or Borough Patrons of the *Noble* Order; and, in amount of *income* and preferment, these 15 are *ten times as great as the other eleven.* So that the Borough families have *ten elevenths*, at least, of the Bishopricks.

Now, let us suppose, for the sake of the argument, that the eleven *other* Bishopricks are filled without any portion of Borough influence. This is supposing a monstrous deal; but, we will, for a moment, so suppose. The Borough families form about *one ten-thousandth part* of the people; and, will any wretch alive, even the impudent man of the COURIER, pretend to believe, that there are *ten times more* piety and scholarship in this *ten thousandth part*, than in all the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine parts? What has been proved of Bishopricks applies to *Livings*, or Benefices of inferior value. All the *rich* ones are filled by the relations, or dependents, of the Borough gentlemen; and thus, in reality, the *Property* of the Church is theirs almost wholly. As to the *Law*, that other great department of emolument, power, and honours, the Borough families are obliged to be content with *patronage*, and that, too, but in a moderate degree; for, the law *requires*, and it *will have*, TALENTS and INDUSTRY. Hence we have seen, Wedderburn, Thurlow, Kenyon, Scott, Mitford, Law, and many others, beat their way up from the ragged Bar to the Peerage; not, indeed, in *defiance* of the Borough gentlemen, but, at the same time, without much of dependence upon them; and, what is very curious to observe, that, while we see all the other *rich* posts filled by the Borough families, they have scarcely ever put their noses into the *active posts* of the *Law*, though some of them rain showers of gold. But, though it is very true, that an Attorney General, a Chief Justice, or a Lord Chancellor, may, by mere possibility, be a superlative villain, it is impossible that he can be a fool.

Observe, however, that I speak only of the *active* posts even of the Law; for, as we have seen, the Borough families engross no small share of the *sinecure emoluments* of that profession too. But, while in the *Army* and the *Church* they are at the *head*, in the law they are at the *Tail.* In the two former, they are Generals and Commanders and Colonels of Regiments, and Bishops and Deans and Archdeacons and Prebends. But, in the latter, they are Prothonatories, Clerks, Filazers, Sealers of Writs, Ushers, Door-keepers, &c. In the two former they are decorated with the Double Epaulet and the Truncheon; with the Mitre and the Red-Thing (I do not know what they call it) which goes over

the shoulders above the surplice. But, in the Courts of Law, while men who have risen from "the *Lower Orders*" (as they call us) are decked out in the Big Wigs and in Purple and Scarlet and Ermined Robes, these high-blooded gentry stoop to the *camlet gown* and the *wand*. THE DUKE OF GRAFTON, for instance, is the *Sealer* in the Court of King's Bench at 2,886 pounds a year, while the *Honourable Louisa* Browning and *Lady B.* Mostyn are Custos Brevium in the Court of Common Pleas! LORD WALSINGHAM is in the petty-office of Comptroller of first fruits in the Court of Exchequer at 150 pounds a year; and Arabella Walker Heneage (a relation of the Earl of Aylsford) is the CHIEF USHER! A pretty office enough for a high blooded Lady! Three of the MOORES, two of them *Clergymen*, and all relations of the Earl of Mount-Cashel, are the *Register* in the Prerogative Court, at 3,670 pounds a year, while an honest coal-merchant's son is the *Judge*. In the Court of Chancery, Lord W. BENTINCK fills the petty-office of *Clerk of the Pipe*, though he is the son of a Duke. Thus it goes all through; and, indeed, so very fit are these high-blooded gentry for high stations in the *Army* and low ones in the *Law*, that many of them who are surprisingly great in arms are compelled to stand in camlet gowns and bare-headed before the Judges! This Lord William Bentinck, for instance, who is *Clerk of the Pipe* in the Court of Chancery, and part of whose office it is to attend the man who *holds up the tail of the Lord Chancellor's Robe* when he enters and leaves the Court; yes, this very identical Clerk of the Pipe is a *Lieutenant General in the Army*, though, when in his other office, he assists the train-bearer to a *Coal Merchant's Son*, as the present Lord Chancellor is. Very nearly the same is the case in numerous instances. Even the "*Great Duke*" himself is nothing more than a *Remembrancer* in the Court of Exchequer in Ireland. It is curious, too, that, now and then one of the Borough race, who have *tried* the Law, and, having given up all hopes of its *honours*, have very coolly condescended to share in its sinecure profits. Thus, The Right Honourable CHARLES YORKE, who long went the Western Circuit in vain in search of *briefs*, appears to have discovered, at last, that, though court-sycophancy may be hereditary from the grand-father, talents for the law are not; and he, therefore, instead of getting upon the bench, has, through the interest of his Borough-patron brother, the Earl of Hardwicke, secured for life, 3,000 pounds a year as *Clerk of the Pells* in the Court of Exchequer, to the *Bench* of which Court, at least, he once aspired.

I could go much further, and shew, that, in fact, it is the Borough-families that have done *all* the mischief.—But, you, my friends, *must* see that it is so. In one character or another they have swallowed up the fortunes of some, and the very bread of others. No wonder that they are loath to part with their *power*, which power places all the earnings of the people in their hands. No wonder, that they have called us *revolutionists*, *jacobins*, and *seditious dogs*, for praying to them to give us up *our right to choose one of the Houses of Parliament*. They talk of *checks* and *balances* in the *Constitution*; and, yet, they have now upon their Table a petition presented by LORD GREY, in 1793, offering to prove at the Bar, that one hundred and thirty persons of the Upper House sent *a majority* into the Lower House! What *check*, what *balance*, can there be in such a state of things?

If Jack, Will and Dick have the joint power of making laws; if all questions be decided by a majority of votes; and if Jack nominates Will and makes him vote as he pleases; is it not Jack who has the absolute power of making what laws he pleases; and, is it not an insult to poor King Dick and to the common sense of mankind to talk about *checks* and *balances*? What we wanted was a House chosen by the *Commons*, that is to say *the People at large*. There is a

Lord's House, and we wanted a *Common's House*. Then, indeed, there would have been *real* checks and balances; and the King would have had some real power of his own. But, to show that he has none, as things are now, we have only to compare the sums which his sons receive out of the public money with the sums received by many of the Borough Gentlemen. Lords Arden, Camden, Buckingham, and several others, have, for many years, been receiving *twice as much a year* as three of the king's sons receive. I believe that the *family of Grenville*, in all its branches, received before the death of the Marquis of Buckingham, *more per annum than the Royal Family*, leaving out the King and Queen. I believe that the *Seymour family*, or the *Manners family*, either of them receive more *now*. Could this be the case, if the King had his due share of *real* authority? Or, could this be the case for one single hour, if there were a *Common's House* of Parliament? No: and this the Borough Gentlemen know full well; and, therefore, we need not wonder at the efforts they make, at the shameful and desperate deeds they resort to, in order to prevent the existence of such a House. *Leases of Crown Lands* is a monstrous thing. Only think of the *Duke of Portland's lease in Marybone Parish!* In short, they have *all* the real *power*; and, of course, they will cut and carve for themselves.

But, they have now an enemy to deal with, whom they will never subdue: that is, the DEBT, which, of course, is *our* true and faithful friend. The wars against America and France, the chief object of both of which was to prevent a Reform of Parliament, could not be carried on without *loans*, or *without the giving up of the emoluments before-mentioned*, and to retain them was the object in preventing a Reform. Yet, it was impossible to raise money enough in *taxes* to continue these emoluments and to carry on the wars too. Hence the Debt, the Funds, the Paper-Money, and those *rivals* of the Borough Gentlemen the *Fundholders*. This is a serious business for the high-blooded order; for either they must *give up their emoluments and their estates into the bargain*, or, *the Fundholders must go unpaid, in part at least*. This is the real state of the thing at this moment. The Borough System approaches its *crisis*. Have patience, my worthy Countrymen; only *a little patience*, and you will see that these *borrowers* and these *lenders* will, at last, do like most other borrowers and lenders; that is to say, come to an open quarrel, after having long cursed each other in their hearts.

That will be the day for the *People*; and, in anxious expectation of that day, I remain most sincerely your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

TO

THE BOROUGHMONGERS,

On the several symptoms of their approaching fall; and on the prospect before them, in case of that fall.

North Hampstead, Long Island, July 16, 1817.

BOROUGHMONGERS,

It is not only natural, but it is right, for men to rejoice at the confusion of their oppressors; and, assuredly, few men have ever felt more sincere joy, than I now feel at perceiving the confusion, in which you actually are, and the much greater confusion, into which you will be plunged. The four corners of the earth will exult at your fall; but in all the four corners of the earth there will not be found a man to rejoice so heartily as I shall. The hungry and the naked, the widow and the fatherless, the captive and the slave, the dying innocent, and the reputation of the murdered, all cry aloud to Heaven for vengeance on you. Your existence is a curse to mankind; and the day of your destruction will be the day of universal deliverance.

That that day is at no great distance every symptom tells me. I perceive, from the London newspapers, just received, that the *Absolute-Power-of-Imprisonment Act is intended to be renewed.* It is done before now, I dare say; and, I told the people, before my departure, that it would be done. It is, probably, renewed *until the next Meeting of Parliament;* that is to say, until there are persons assembled ready to renew it again. And so it will go on; for, never will there be even the shadow of liberty in England any more, until the House of Commons shall be reformed. No one but a most profound hypocrite could pretend to believe, that this act ever would be repealed until the time of *real Reform* should come. This act, which, in fact, is the all-in-all of the present system, was absolutely necesssary, if Reform did not take place. It was, therefore, most ridiculous in any one to pretend to disapprove of this Act, and, at the same time, to disapprove of Reform; seeing that one of the two must absolutely take place; and I am astonished, or, I should be astonished, if I did not so well know the whole history and mistery of the thing, at hearing such men as Lords Grey and Holland and Mr. Brand and Mr. Bennett opposing the renewal of the Act, while they, at the same time, oppose a Reform that shall give the people who pay taxes a right to vote for those who are to impose those taxes. Do such feeble men as Mr. BRAND think that they can ever persuade the people to be satisfied with any thing short of their full rights? Do such men imagine, that the speakers at the several Reform Meetings are to be made content with the rejection of what Mr. Brand called their

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"*wild projects*"! No; they may be well assured, that even if SIR FRANCIS BURDETT were to be intimidated into an association with these "moderate" gentlemen, the People would only become the more resolved not to yield a particle of their rights.

The Act will continue in force as long as money can be raised to give the *appearance* of paying the interest of the Debt. One would wonder what the views of the Parliament could be in this measure. They imagine, that the Act will keep the people quiet, "*'till things come about*," I suppose. But, if any thing could add to the impediments to *things coming about*, it would be this Act itself. Things cannot come about any more than the Thames can come about, and run back to Oxfordshire. The very root of national prosperity is arrested in its progress. It is dried up by taxation; and the plant will daily and hourly become feebler and feebler. The *People* have nothing to do but to wait with patience. They will suffer. They must suffer. But, they will not die by millions to please Mr. MALTHUS and his savage disciples of the high-blooded orders. They must have *something to eat*. Let the People only wait with a little patience, and they will see "*things come about*" in reality.

It was in order that I and my family might wait with *patience*, that I came hither; for, *patient* I could not have been in *silence*, and they would not have been patient while I was in a dungeon. The sort of treatment, which was in reserve for me, may be easily judged of from the following account, which I find in the London papers, relative to the treatment of the State Prisoners at Reading, in Berkshire:—

"In consequence of the acting magistrates for the county of Berks "having been refused admittance to "the state prisoners in the gaol of "Reading (though they were in the "constant habit of visiting that gaol) "they addressed Queries to the Secretary of State for the home department on the subject, and received "answers. The following is a copy "of the Queries and Answers.

"(COPY.)—The Visiting Magistrates of Reading Gaol wish for Answers to the undermentioned Questions from the Right Honourable "Secretary of State:—

"Q. May Magistrates generally of "the county of Berks visit the State "Prisoners in common with other "prisoners, which they are privileged to do, and ask questions, and enter into conversation with them?—"A. No, except upon special reasons "being assigned, which must be submitted to and be judged of by the "Secretary of State.

"Q. If State Prisoners may have a "copy of Official Directions to "Gaolers?—A. No.

"Q. If they may have a free use of "pen, ink, and paper, under certain "restrictions, as ordered by the official Directions?—A. Vide Official "Directions, which must be strictly "observed.

"Q. If they may read the Public "London or Provincial Newspapers, "under certain restrictions?—A. No.

"Q. If they may have books to "read from Circulating Libraries?—"A. Such books as are approved of "by the Visiting Magistrate.

"Q. If they may have wine, or "strong beer, or ale, in limited quantities, at their own expence, or that "of government?—A. What quantity is desired?

"Q. If through the day they be "confined in solitary cells, and at "night in better apartments, if such "can be procured by Magistrates for

" them?—A. To be confined in such " manner as has been usual, and in " such apartments as have been here- " tofore allotted to State Prisoners.

" In consequence of new directions " sent down, the three prisoners were " confined in separate rooms, after " having been left all together in one " apartment for a fortnight!"

Ah! Boroughmongers! It is much pleasanter to sit here under the shade of trees, loaded with fruit, and only wanting hands to gather and mouths to eat it, than to be begging of Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh permission to breathe the sweet air! Much better amusement is it to be drying fruits in the Sun to please my little boys and girls when they come, than to be peeping through the iron grates and bars of the jails and listening to hear whether their prayers have obtained them access to my damp and dreary cavern. Much better to be here, laughing at you, and teaching the world at once to hate and despise you, than to be hearing the distant cries of those children, who will live to see vengeance on you or on yours. Here I can read all the London news-papers, without Lord Sidmouth's leave; nor are his *magistrates* to *select my books for me.* No wonder that your COURIER was enraged at my departure! I am at once in full view of you and beyond the reach of your dark and deep malignity. I am looking down upon you as upon a nest of insects, destined to have all your works defeated and to be crushed, at last, amidst your fancied security. I see you hard at work, digging the pit, into which you yourselves are to be tumbled; and I anticipate the pleasure of being one of those who are to tumble you into that pit. What the treatment of the unfortunate men, now shut up, is, the world will easily judge, from the above document. The magistrates even are not to see them and converse with them, without special permission of the Secretary of State, upon special reasons being assigned! How happy I must have been to be an object of the *kind interference* of the Magistrates! How comfortable my family must have felt at seeing a man like me *an object of compassion* with these worshipful gentry, amongst whom are the Giffords, the Bowleses, the Watsons, the Baineses, the Willises, the General Porters, the Sinecure Minchins, the Col. Fletchers, the Parson Powises, the Sellons, and the like! Oh, no! my good Boroughmongers, I knew what was coming too well to let my body remain within the run of Sidmouth's and Castlereagh's warrants. That pen, which had thrown you into consternation was not to be stopped without an effort on my part to keep it in motion. I was resolved to do all that I could to enable me to combat you at home; but, at any rate, while there was an inch of free country left in the world, I was resolved still to combat you. And, to this dilemma I again tell you that you are reduced; the laws of England must still continue a dead letter; the people must all be exposed incessantly to arbitrary imprisonment; in short, the *thing*, which now is, and which I need not name, *must continue*, or, my writings must have *their free course*, and I must have, as the just reward of my own talents, a greater fortune than the most of you have from those estates, which you inherit from your ancestors. Provoking as this is to you; mortifying as it is to

your insolent pride, you cannot help yourselves; nor can you show your resentment in any way, which will not make a fresh exposure of your folly and baseness.

In what I have said above, I by no means wish to be understood, as meaning, that there are *none* amongst the magistrates, whose compassion one might not wish to have. The Magistrates in *Monmouthshire*, those at *Reading*, and a Col. *Williams* in Lancashire, have shown, that they still retain some sense of shame for the situation of their country. They, doubtless, begin to perceive, that the present state of things is not to be temporary, if it be meant to remain, until the People shall be content without a reform. They may begin to reflect, that, in fact, all this abrogation of the law is for *your sakes*, and not for the sake of the peace of the country and the safety of the Throne. Men may be hardened up by their prejudices and their political anger; but, a time comes for *reflection;* and, if the Gentlemen of England *reflect*, they will soon perceive, that they are the first to be sacrificed, seeing that *You* and the *Fundholders* will cling to each other to the last possible moment; because, as I believe at least, and as I most anxiously hope, your existence wholly depends on each other.

The project for *relieving the distresses* of the nation out of those very taxes, the raising of which *is the cause of those distresses*, is a strong symptom of the desperateness of your situation. The young patriotic Boroughmongers of Tavistock and Bedford may prate as long as they please about a "*moderate Reform*"; but, they will find, that there must be no *middle course* pursued to put an end to the distresses, which now press upon the nation, and in which the great mass of the People will become every day more and more *cool* as spectators. These distresses will take away the fortunes of the gentlemen who remain not ruined; they will sweat down the big and merciless yeomen; they will *empty out* completely every half-beggared, insolent fellow, who has been living upon war. The mass of the people must live. They all *hate you* to a man; and, in that hatred they will 'ere long be joined by many, who now cling to your cause. All men say, that there is something wrong somewhere; and, every man will soon find out where it is.

In the Debate of the 28th of April, on a Petition from DUNFERMLINE, there were some curious observations relative to the *interest of the Debt;* and the whole passage is so important, that I shall transcribe it here for the purpose of putting it upon record.

"Lord COCHRANE said, during "many years he had resided in the "neighbourhood of Dunfermline, and "then those persons who were now "petitioning, maintained themselves "by the manufactures which were "established in that part of the coun"try; but now, in common with so "many other manufactures in this "country, they had fallen into de"cay, in consequence of the burden "of Taxation, till at last the wages "of the workmen were altogether in"adequate to their support. Unless "a diminution of taxation should "take place it was impossible that "the people could be relieved, and "so long as places and pensions "should be the reward of subser"viency, so long would the burdens "continue and those persons remain "unrelieved. It was necessary, "therefore, that Parliamentary Re-

" form should take place—that that " House should be purged—that its " Members should act for the benefit " of the country at large, and not " with a view merely to the circum- " stances of their own families, or " the rewards which might be given " to them. All assistance by way of " issue of Exchequer Bills, whether to " the extent of two millions or fifty mil- " lions, would be found unavailing; " all came out of the pockets of the " people. Agriculture must be reliev- " ed, and commerce revived by re- " moving the burdens which threaten- " ed all ranks of the country with des- " truction. He had been down lately " into the county of Kent, where he " could not help being struck with " seeing the mansions of the country " Gentlemen almost all deserted, and " to be let or sold, the families having " left the country. The only relief " which the Chancellor of the Exche- " quer could grant, was a diminution " of taxation—all other remedies " were futile. The Chancellor of the " Exchequer would find himself before " two years were expired, and before " long, perhaps, compelled to reduce " the interest of the National Debt. " And what would be the injury? " Had they not seen the value of land " reduced one-half, and all other " property reduced in value!—They " found it at present necessary to " issue Exchequer Bills to support an " enormous Military Establishment— " and for what?—*to keep down the* " *people, who were suffering under an* " *insupportable taxation.* The only " relief which they were to obtain was " the Cottage Tax. They did not " think of relieving them from the " other heavy and grinding taxes— " from the Salt Tax for instance, " which took 20*s.* a year from every " poor man in the Kingdom. By " the Malt and Salt Taxes alone, " the people paid more than all " the higher classes twice told. " It was perhaps unnecessary to pe- " tition, but still if they did not " do so now, it would soon be too " late, for there was a point beyond " which suffering could not be borne. " He had, since coming home, seen " many people in a state of starva- " tion—he had seen many in such a " state before — and while in the " country he had seen people lying " starving about the hedges and " ditches. That the higher ranks " were unable longer to bear the bur- " den, was proved by the measure " which the Chancellor of the Exche- " quer was about to propose. That " measure, however, would not re- " lieve that class of men by whom " the present Petition was presented, " and with respect to industry, good " morals, and religion, the conduct " of no class of men was more praise- " worthy than that of the present " Petitioners.

" Mr. GRENFELL rose, to *call the* " *attention of the House to the circum-* " *stance that the Noble Lord had offered* " *a third time to them*, a proposition " which was neither more nor less " than that the House should be " guilty of *a breach of public faith.* " [Hear, hear, hear!] It was not " likely that the proposition should " make much impression on them, or " on the good sense of the people of " this country. It was now the third " time, however, that the Noble " Lord had submitted to them a pro- " position, to do that which would be " as ruinous to the public interest, as " it was at variance with every prin- " ciple of good faith.

" Lord COCHRANE observed, that " when he brought forward the motion, " which it was his intention to submit " to the House on this subject, it " would be then seen whether there " was any thing derogatory to na- " tional honour in the reduction of " the interest of the National Debt.

" Lord MILTON would not have " risen *if these sentiments were confined* " *to the Noble Lord*; but the Noble " Lord was *not the only person who* " *entertained them*, and it was to " guard against their spreading, that " *it became the House to express their*

" *condemnation of them.* He thought " with his Honourable Friend (Mr. " Grenfell) that *any reduction of the* " *Interest of the National Debt was a* " *breach of public faith*, and such a " measure could not be resorted to " *till we were arrived at a much greater* " *degree of distress than that which* " *now prevailed in this country.* The " Fundholders would have much to " complain of, if any thing like the " proposition of the Noble Lord " were entertained.

" Mr. WM. SMITH said, having " already thrown out hints of his " opinion on the subject, he should " think himself deficient in political " courage if he remained altogether " silent on the present occasion. He " did not think, however, that the " subject ought to come before the " House in a bye way; he thought " this a most improper mode of en- " tering on a question of this sort, " which he wished to see taken up at " large on its own grounds. What- " ever opinion he entertained on the " subject, he should have no objec- " tion to deliver it when the question " came before the House."

The sublime LORD MILTON has here declared, that, to reduce the interest would be a breach of national faith. No, my Lord, " the nation's best hope," as the hired Burke called you; it would be no breach of *national* faith; for, it has not yet been shown, that the *nation* has borrowed the money. But, be this as it may, it will be a breach in the Borough system, and that you think, I dare say; for, to suppose, that the grant to Burke's executors, and that the pensions to the Elliots could continue to be paid, when it was found impossible to pay the interest of the Debt in full, is too absurd. In short, the Debt and the Boroughs mutually depend on each other.

This sublime Lord, however, who harps upon Mr. CROKER's 250 pounds, while he says nothing of the thousands upon thousands, *paid to Burke's executors*, does seem to speak on this tremulous subject with some little *qualification*. He says, that " such a mea- " sure could not be resorted to, " *till* we were arrived at a *much* " *greater degree of distress than* " *that which now prevailed in this* " *country.*" So! " The nation's " best hope" does, then, allow, that there *may be* such a measure adopted, *when* the nation has arrived at a much greater degree of distress! This is the pinching point! This Debt, contracted for the putting down of freedom in France and for the endeavour to put it down in America; this Debt, a great part of which can be traced to the pockets of you, the Boroughmongers and your dependents; this Debt, this friendly Debt, will, at last, give our country freedom.

The very talk of the matter, in this way, is a very ominous symptom. This Debt, my Lord Milton, is not to be *gagged*. Only two years ago you expressed your eager desire to " *come to close* " *quarters with the Reformers;*" but, the moment they accepted your challenge, you called in the *gens-d'armerie*, and not only bound them to keep the peace, but gagged them into the bargain; and your beautiful aid-de-camp, instead of answering our arguments, called them " *weekly* " *venom*," and reported the necessity of new laws to make us hold our tongues! This was just what Burke did before him. He wrote a book; and, when his book was answered, and shown to be full of falsehood and of folly, the pension-hunting slave called upon the *Attorney-General* to re-

ply to his adversary! But, great Lord Milton, you cannot silence the Debt in this way. There is no *gag* that will fit this devouring friend of Reform; and, the moment its demands are unsatisfied, it will set to work to inquire, *who it is* that has *received* the money that was lent!

For my part, I never would consent to reduce the interest of the Debt one single fraction, until a *refunding* had taken place on the part of all those who have, without services, been pocketing the public money for the last forty or fifty years; and, I would make them give up interest as well as principal. This is so reasonable; it is so just; it is so obviously necessary to a fair and honest settlement of the account, that it always strikes every man as soon as the reduction of the interest of the Debt is mentioned. And, this it is that alarms the Boroughmongers whenever that reduction is the subject of discussion. Discussed, however, the subject must be; and that, too, in a very short period.

It was discovered by the Committee of the House of Lords, that the *character* of the People had become *changed*, since they had taken to reading *certain cheap publications*. This is a very bad symptom for the Boroughmongers. It must, according to all common estimate, have changed *for the better*; or else, what becomes of the thousands of printed statements of the good effects of the wondrous circulation of Bibles and of Cheap Tracts? Here has been such a clutter about schools and about mending the morals of the poor by the means of *reading*, that one almost expected to see nothing like vice on the face of the earth. And, all of a sudden, the government is taken as it were in a *fit*, at the sight of a two-penny pamphlet! And every power that can be put into motion is exerted to *prevent reading!* The truth is, that there is but too much reason to suspect, that all these plans for teaching the people what is called *morality*, had their origin in *the fear* of their reading what might tend to render them *really enlightened*. It was perceived, that the spirit of reading was abroad. It was perceived, that the people *would read*; and, the object of the Bible Societies and other such like combinations was to prevent them from reading politics. It was hoped, that by feeding the children with little books about religion and morality, as they are called, they would be *prevented from seeking farther*. This was the foundation of all these Educating Societies; and, the total failure of their object is one of the worst symptoms for you; for, it is impossible for your usurpations to be long tolerated by a really enlightened people.

The People are now reduced to *silence*; but, it has been done by *force*—by mere force. There were no combinations against the form of government. There existed no desire to overthrow the government in King, Lords, and Commons. There was no ground for fear on the score of *revolutionary* views; but, there was great and solid ground for fear on the score of the Boroughmongers and their families; for the people were, and are, bent upon a reform of this evil. The *talents*, too, which the People discovered, upon all occasions when they came forward, were such as to astound *you*. You called them *rabble*, and their speeches and resolutions you called *trash*; but you had sense

enough to see, that this *trash* was such as you were unable to come up to. You saw that political knowledge of the highest order was possessed in abundance by those whom your insolent pride had placed in the "*Lower Orders;*" that the leaders in the cause of Reform had eloquence as well as knowledge at command; and that it was impossible any longer to keep the people in the dark. While political discussions were confined to Palace Yard and to the Guild-hall, where a few persons, long in the habit of addressing the people, repeated, time after time, the old common-place complaint against Corruption, and where the business of the day generally ended in some vague statement of public wrongs; as long as political discussions were thus confined in their influence, you laughed at the efforts of the Reformers. But, when you saw the speeches and papers from Nottingham, Manchester, Bristol, Glasgow, Paisley; when you read those eloquent speeches and papers, abounding in information of all sorts, exhibiting novelty of idea, force of expression, depth of thought; when you saw at these and various other places, men *lamenting their want of education*, far surpassing in eloquence and political knowledge any of the *cocks* of the House of Commons; when you saw them seizing hold of and clearly displaying all the causes, near and remote, of the nation's miseries, then you became alarmed for the safety of your emoluments, of which emoluments I spoke in the last Number of this work.

The nature, extent, and effect of the Debt; the transactions of the Bank of England; the curious works of the East-India Company; the effects of the changes in the value of the Paper-money; the amount, distribution, causes and effects of the taxes; the origin, progress, and result of pauperism. These were matters, of which you, and even the College Doctors, your Schoolmasters, had only a vague notion. They were matters, to understand which required not only thought, but clear heads to think with. What, then, was your surprize and your affright, when you saw, that they were all well understood by those whom you called the "*Lower Orders*," and whose capacities you had thought to be hardly sufficient to the clear comprehension of the story of the Babes in the Wood!

There were not wanting men to *envy* this proof of talent in the people at large, instead of seeing it with delight, as might have been expected in them. It seems, that they could not find in their hearts to part with their monopoly of talent of this kind! A most reprehensible weakness! It has, however, done no harm to the people's cause. It seemed to be too much for these persons to endure, to see rising up, all of a sudden, hundreds of men of greater talent than themselves. They saw, all at once, the public papers filled with new names. They saw the highest applause accompanying those names. Their own names they seldom saw in print. They sickened at the sight of the crowd of intruders. They felt conscious of their own want of capacity to retain their former planet-like station. They became *froward* and *lukewarm*. They not only silently consigned over the Reformers to your tender mercy; but, as I verily believe, they secretly rejoiced at the silencing of their rivals, and

that their joy surpassed even that of the sons and daughters of Corruption.

These envious persons, too, look *forward*, and calculate upon the consequences of a Reform to *themselves*. They clearly see, in spite of their vanity, that, if a Reform were actually to take place, *talents would predominate*, and that *names* would soon sink out of sight. They feel, that it would be impossible for them to be at *the head* of a real Common's House of Parliament; and, therefore, it better suits them to have things in such a state, that they shall always have something to complain of. Protected from your fangs by their wealth or station, they can, with impunity, deal out their invectives against you, while men of greater talent are reduced to silence. This is precisely the state of things which suits their views. However, the time for putting their sincerity to the test is now come. There are great numbers of men actually in prison under the Absolute-power-of-imprisonment Act. If the men, whom I rather more than suspect of *secretly rejoicing* at this, now come forward, not with vague, loose general charges against Ministers, on this score, but with *specific propositions*, naming the individuals who are in prison; defending their conduct manfully; demanding inquiry; and stating all they have heard as to each individual case; if they spend the time of the prorogation in visiting the spots where the prisoners have been said to have committed crimes, and in conversing with and succouring their parents and their wives and children; and if they meet the Ministers at the opening of the next session with distinct statements upon each case, in the form of resolutions, or otherwise; if they make diligent and personal inquiry into all the cases where the Magistrates have bound men over, or sent them to prison, on the authority of Lord Sidmouth's Circular; if they succour those men, or their parents or wives and children; and, if they bring forward all their cases, with the *names* of all the parties concerned, and cause (as they may if they choose) a record of all these facts to be made, in the form of resolutions, in the Journals of the House of Commons; if they do these things, or, at least, if they perform this sacred duty to the utmost of their power, *then*, I shall declare my perfect conviction of their SINCERITY. But, if they do none of this; if they deal in loose generalities; if they content themselves with pouring forth declamatory charges of oppression and tyranny against the Ministers; if they wait for the supplications of the prisoners or their families; if they suffer those supplications to lie unopened upon their table for weeks; if they amuse themselves with playing at fives, with shooting, or with fox-hunting, while the poor prisoners are groaning out their last breath in jail, and while their wives and children and parents are perishing in despair; *then* I shall be quite certain, that my suspicions of their INSINCERITY are well founded; I shall treat with scorn and contempt all the professions of these men of their love of liberty and of justice; and shall set them down amongst the basest of hypocrites.

I have recommended nothing here which is not practicable, and even

easy of performance. A tour of a *month* would complete the business; *two thousand pounds* would succour all the distressed parties. And, besides, this would inspire life into the drooping hearts of these people, who, being closely related to the suffering prisoners, ought not to be considered as common paupers. I have here recommended nothing that I would not do myself. I should be ashamed to think of enjoying *amusement*, or of *amassing money*, while men were suffering for having acted upon the principles which I had almost abused them, for years, for not acting on. Nothing is so great a consolation to a man, who is shut up in a prison, as to know that his case is fairly stated to the world, and especially to know, that it is placed upon record in a way that gives him a chance of finally obtaining justice. Nothing is more easy than for any Member of Parliament to obtain all the facts relative to the case of each of the State Prisoners. Industry and honest zeal only are wanted to put these in the form of *Resolutions*, which any Member may move, and which, if only *seconded*, must be put on the Journals of the House. Is it not, therefore, a base desertion of duty to leave this undone, if a man has health and talent sufficient for the task, and if he profess to hold in abhorrence the power under which the prisoners are suffering?

Distant as I am from the scene, and narrow as my means may be, it is still in my power to do more, in this respect, than I am afraid will be done by any body else, though I most anxiously hope that my fear may be groundless. In order that I may do all that I am able, I hereby request every man who is, or may be, shut up under the Absolute-Power-of-Imprisonment-Act; every man who may be imprisoned, or held to bail, under the authority of Lord Sidmouth's Circular; every man who may have suffered under the Hawkers and Pedlar's Act for selling my writings; every man who may have suffered under the Sedition Bill; or, the relations, or friends, of every such man, to make out a full statement of his case, to relate the whole story, and to state all *times* and *names* which occur, and which it may be useful to have upon record.

1. The name of the suffering party.

2. The name, or names of any Magistrates, or others, concerned in the taking of him into custody.

3. The place where the suffering party resided, and the place and time of his being apprehended.

4. The jail where he is, or was confined, if imprisoned.

5. The sort of treatment he has received.

6. The amount of any fine, or bail.

7. Whether he has a wife and children, or aged parents.

8. His trade, or calling.

9. The circumstances of his family or parents.

10. The nature of the offence alledged against him, if any has been alledged.

11. The name and place of abode of the person who makes the statement.

12. If there be any persons, who can give *evidence* as to the facts, their names should be put down, that we may one day or other, call upon them.

When the statement is made out, let it be sent, by a private hand, if possible, to *The Publisher of my Pamphlet* in London, sealed up and directed to WILLIAM COBBETT. These statements will then reach me, in no very long time, and the parties shall hear from me without any expence to them. There are good men in England yet, who have hearts and purses too, and who think that the suffering State Prisoners ought to be as dear to them as the Prussians and Hanoverians, who were so liberally relieved by English Subscriptions. I can write to some of these men. I can send them lists of the sufferers. There is one in particular, whom I never heard of till I arrived in this Island, and who has most generously offered me pecuniary aid, in case I stand in need of it. To this worthy gentleman I have only to say, that whatever he may be pleased to give in order to comfort the State Prisoners, or their relations, I shall look upon as *given to myself*. I have waited with some impatience to see a Subscription opened in London for this purpose. And unless it be done, the sufferers will at any rate, know that they have *nobody to thank*. For my own part, it is, at present, quite uncertain what means I shall have at my disposal. But, I know, that I shall have my *liberty*, and full scope for my industry, *untaxed* and *untithed*. So will my sons; and we are not at all afraid of having some little matter, which great frugality will enable us to spare; and, next, after those who immediately depend upon us for food and raiment, the persons suffering under the above-mentioned acts have a claim upon us; and, as our means shall enable us, we will afford them and their relations succour. Therefore, I hope, that none of these parties will neglect to comply with my request in forwarding their statements in the manner before mentioned. I see by the London papers, that Mr. BENBOW of Manchester, is imprisoned under the Absolute-power-of-imprisonment Act. I know Mr. BENBOW to be an honest, zealous, loyal little fellow. So far from his being disposed to any acts of *treason*, I know that he was going to Lord Sidmouth to state to him the real situation of the poor in Lancashire, and to beseech him to do something to cheer them and to prevent their being thrown into confusion by despair. I myself advised him not to go, knowing that it would be useless. Mr. BENBOW is not a married man, I believe; but, he may have an aged father or mother; and if that aged parent, or any friend of Mr. BENBOW, will write to me, and tell me how the money is to be conveyed, I will take care that he, or his parent, or friend, for him, shall receive twenty guineas. Mr. KNIGHT of Manchester also is, it seems, in prison. I shall be glad to hear from any relation, or friend, of his; and to know whether I can be of any service to them, in any way, or to Mr. KNIGHT himself. These worthy men I look upon as having a claim upon me for anything that I can do for them, even though inconvenience and some degree of suffering should thereby be produced to myself and my family. I myself am in safety, thanks to this wise government and brave people; but, I never can think, that I am not bound to feel for, and to assist to the utmost of my power, those of my countrymen, who have fallen with-

in that grasp, from which I had the good fortune to escape. I should look upon it as unfeeling, and even as criminal, if I were to enjoy any thing beyond mere necessaries, while they and their wives and children are in want and misery.

For these reasons I most earnestly beg them to make known to me their situations, in the manner before pointed out. Besides, it is necessary to collect the facts now, while all the parties are *alive*. Some of these poor souls will, I dare say, *die in prison;* but, by having their names and all the circumstances on record, we shall, at any time, be able to bring their cases forward, and to obtain justice, one day or other, on any one, who may have acted illegally towards them. The statements will all remain safe in my possession, to be brought forth whenever the proper time shall arrive; and, if I should not then be alive, my sons, or one of them, I dare say, will; and, I trust, that neither of them will fail to act as their father would have acted. The writers of the several statements may rely upon their names not being made public. Their papers will all reach me in spite of every thing that can be done to prevent it. I will arrange them all properly, and will prepare the several cases for being brought forward when the time for doing it shall arrive. The statements should mention the names, not only of the parties immediately concerned in doing the things abovementioned, but also the names of any *persecuting individuals*, who may have aided or encouraged men in any oppressive acts. The importance of collecting and preserving these facts is so obvious, that I will not suppose it necessary to say any more upon the subject.

Another branch of information is also to be attended to: that is, the conduct of the several Benches of Magistrates, or of particular Magistrates, with regard to Lord Sidmouth's Circular. It will be valuable for us to possess the Speeches of Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, and their Charges to Grand Juries, upon the subject of that Circular. If these be inserted in Provincial Papers, they may be forwarded to my Publisher. Otherwise sketches of them may be sent in writing. Besides these, it will be desirable to possess the names and place of abode of any individuals, who, by the turning off of tradesmen, workmen, or by any other acts, have shown, or shall show, themselves to be *persecutors* of the People, and aiders and abettors of the Boroughmongers.

I should be very much obliged to any one, who would forward to me, through the same channel, the Christian and Surnames of all those persons, who have been Governors and Directors of the Bank of England and of the East India Company since the year 1792; and, if possible, of all those who have been army Contractors since that period. These will be necessary to a true history of these times; and, I pledge myself to give them all their suitable place in that history.

And now, my good Boroughmongers, in returning from this long digression, let me ask you what you flatter yourselves will be *your lot* at the conclusion of the grand drama? You will retort, perhaps, and ask me, *what I think it will be?* To which I answer, that I cannot precisely say, what it will be; but that I do really believe

it will be rather "*unsatisfactory.*" You must efface all traces of recollection from the mind of the People of England before you can hope to be forgiven. You have been the cause of more misery than sword or pestilence ever produced. I looked upon the lightening, on board the Importer, which threatened us all with instant death, as more kind and friendly towards us, than you have been, and are, towards the people of that country, which was once so happy, and is now so miserable. There is very little distinction to be made between you. There are some of you who play the farce of pretending to disapprove of the present state of coercion. But, how can you disapprove of the Act of Power of Imprisonment, while you *hold boroughs?* You must be hypocrites in this respect; for, it would be impossible to hold the boroughs for any length of time, without an army such as now exists, and without the absolute power of imprisonment, lodged in the hands of somebody. It was not main force that you had to dread; not open insurrection; not open battle in arms; but, it was the force of argument, the powers of reasoning, the operations of the *mind* of the nation. These were what you had to dread; and these were all advancing against you so fast; they were surrounding you on every side, and circumventing you in every root, with such force, that you could not have stood another year, without the recent measures. This you saw very clearly; and, therefore, for *any of you* to pretend to *disapprove* of those measures must be down right hypocrisy, unless your disapproval had been accompanied with an offer to *surrender your boroughs.* When I hear the Russells and Bennets, at the Westminster Dinner, professing their abhorrence of the recently passed Acts of Parliament; when I hear them exclaiming against *Gags*, I should like to ask them, whether they are ready to approve of the giving up of the *boroughs?* Whether they are ready to rely solely upon the *unbought voice of electors* for their seats in parliament? Whether they are, in short, ready to vote for a law, which shall give to every man a vote who pays a tax? Whether they are ready to vote, actually vote, for a law, that shall leave the Nobility nothing but what really belongs to them; that is to say, their hereditary legislatorship, and that shall give up the Common's House to the fair and impartial race of *integrity and talent?* I should like to put this question to them; and, if they answered that they were ready to do all this, I, on my part, should be ready to confess, that I was most agreeably surprised! Oh, no! This is not what they mean. They merely mean to make the People believe, that they wish for what the people wish for; and this we have a right to conclude against every one who *talks* about being a friend to the liberties of the country, and who *still holds a borough;* for, indeed, what can be more ridiculous, than to profess an indignation against robbery, while the party has not only a part of the stolen goods in his possession, but while he perseveres in keeping it? "*Restitution*, or "*Damnation*," is the maxim of the Catholic Priests in the taking of the confessions of thieves and fraudulent persons. But, these repentant Bo-

roughmongers seem to expect to secure their salvation *without making restitution.* They will be deceived; for now-a-days, there is not a single man in all England who does not well know, that it is the borough system to which the nation owes all its miseries.

Is it possible, that such a nation can have been reduced to such a state *without a cause?* What is it that has produced that universal beggary, that starvation, those suicides and untimely deaths, those innumerable thefts and murders, which now afflict and disgrace the land? It is the poverty of the great mass of the people; this has been produced by the taxes; these are demanded by the Army and the Debt; and these have been created by *your influence.* You, therefore, have been the *real cause* of all the calamities; and this is now as well known and understood as the cause of the blood proceeding from a cut by a knife. It is clear to every man, that, if the *people* had been fully and fairly represented, this Army and this Debt would not now have existed. There was no motive, other than that of securing your power for any of the wars of the last 56 years. This country, America, must have become independent in the course of ages, but, it was *your* oppressions that accelerated the event; and which thereby produced a new power in the world to face England upon the seas. *Taxation without representation* was what you *then* contended for; and it is what you contend for *now.* We are now engaged in the *old* quarrel with you, and you are endeavouring, for the first time, during profound peace, to defeat us by a suspension of all the remaining liberties of the country.

In this country, there are men, heartily devoted to our cause, who, nevertheless, *despair.* But these men do not perceive the *novelty of your situation.* They say, that *former* efforts against you have all *failed.* This is not correct. The efforts against you in *this country* did not fail. Besides, though men have *written* and *talked,* for a great many years past, against you, when did they write, or talk, with such effect as of *late?* When were there eloquent and well-informed men *before* rising up in crowds amongst the people themselves, without any participation of those who call themselves the "*Higher Orders*"? When did a million and a half of men *before* petition for a Reform, and trace, in their petitions, all their calamities to this source? When, *before,* were you compelled to resort to measures, such as are now in force, in order to stifle the voice of the People? When did the Parliament *before* pass laws upon such Reports? When was the press *before* subjected to any thing so near to direct *Bourbon Censorship?* When was the Parliament *before* compelled to issue Exchequer Bills in aid of the Poors-Rates? When were there, *before,* a Debt requiring 44 millions annually to pay the interest; and an Army in time of peace requiring nearly 20 millions more annually, with a revenue falling short of 40 millions, and daily decreasing?

These are all *novelties* in your situation. They are all so many circumstances hostile to you, and, of course, favourable to the People, who have nothing to do but to remain tranquil for a year or two, and let

you proceed. The thing will cure itself. Corruption will eat out Corruption. One class after another will fall into misery, 'till. in a short time, the state of things will be such as for it to be impossible to hold the system together. Those, who, from folly, or false pride, now hang on to your skirts, will be shaken off, or, rather, they will drop off from their feebleness. You will daily find, that such persons begin to discover, that they have been sacrificed for *your sakes only* and that of your associates, the fundholders, contractors, and loan-jobbers. 'Till, at last, you will have nobody but yourselves, and those whom you are able to *purchase*, to support your cause. In short, the question still is, whether you can carry on *your* system *after* the Funding System is destroyed; for the time of its destruction must come. This is the question; and, to know how this question is to be decided, there only wants *time;* and that, too, no very long time.

There are some men, in America, and great numbers, too, who, from father to son, have *always* been what is called *friends of England.* These men, from a spirit natural to every opposition, have constantly confounded the *English Government* with the *English Nation.* The whole put together, they have called *England.* Their opponents have also fallen into a like confusion of ideas. The former have contended that all was always *right* in England; and the latter the contrary. But, there has, of *late*, been a great *change* in the language of the former. *Loose complaints* and *invectives* had no weight with them. They easily reconciled their minds to Acts, however severe, against "*the friends of Bonaparte;*" against "*Jacobins* and *Atheists.*" But, *now*, when they know that Napoleon is a captive in our hands; *now*, when we have put an end to all war and all danger of war; *now*, when we are at peace with all the world; *now*, to see the present system adopted, a thousand times more severe than at any period of war; *now*, when it is quite impossible for any man to pretend, that we have one grain of freedom left; or that it is probable that a time will ever come for the restoration of our freedom; *now*, when the Ministers have the absolute power of punishing and when even the inferior Magistrates have a like power, without any *trial at all*, to say nothing about *trial by jury;* NOW, these men, hereditarily the obstinate defenders of all the acts of the English government, behold these things, and when they, who are generally by nature compassionate, see, in the proceedings of the Parliament itself, the undeniable proofs of the people of their favourite England being reduced to a state of misery such as never before afflicted the heart of humanity; NOW, these men begin to confess, that there is SOMETHING AMISS! They are loath to join their adversaries in condemning you; but, at the least, they cease to *defend* you. They keep silence, shrug up their shoulders, hope that the calamity and disgrace are but *temporary;* but, at the bottom of their hearts, repent of ever having been your friends and eulogists. This is the commencement of a most

material change in this important part of the world, which has its influence on every other part, and which change is precisely of the same sort as that, which is going on at this moment amongst the good men, in England itself, who have confounded *your interests* with those of *the King and the People*, who have hitherto thought that *loyalty* and *love of country* consisted in those principles and acts, which really had for their object and end solely *your exclusive* benefit and aggrandizement.

Thus, as your pecuniary means will decrease, your friends will also decrease, and you will find your troubles and your dangers daily grow upon you, until the day will arrive, when you will have reason to repent, that you did not, in time, yield that which never was your own. The Reformers have nothing to do but to wait with patience. Above all things not to suffer themselves to be cajoled into any acquiescence in what are called *moderate* Reforms. Not to be deceived by specious, high-sounding *talk* from those who *do nothing*. Not to be the tools of the tools of artful pretenders to public-spirit. Let them watch the *actions* of men. Let them keep their eye upon what men *do*, and not lend their ear to what they *say*. Let them see who it is that *succours the Prisoners and their families*, and who brings forward their cases in a plain and bold manner, and causes them to be put upon record; and let them not give their honest and credulous hearts to the utterers of *big words* about oppression and tyranny, who, in quitting the forum, retire to the fives-court in Bond-street, to the Gaming Houses a little lower down, or to the jovial Fox-chase, or Shooting Party, while the poor sufferers are pining out their souls in a jail, without knowing the cause of their imprisonment, or being able to guess at the time of their deliverance.

Let the People act thus, and lie quietly upon their oars. Let them join in no *sham Whig* meetings; give their sanction to none of those, who would slacken the cords in order to take a fresh purchase and bind them up for ever. Let them suspect the sincerity of every one, who talks of any thing short of annual parliaments and a vote for every sane man twenty one years of age. Let them yield not one jot of their rights, and to them, to you, and to all parties, complete justice will be done in a very very few years.

W. COBBETT.

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

A HISTORY
OF
THE LAST HUNDRED DAYS OF ENGLISH FREEDOM,

Ending with the Passing of the Absolute-Power-of-Imprisonment Act, in the Month of March, 1817.

ADDRESSED TO

MR. JOHN GOLDSMITH, OF HAMBLEDON, AND MR. RICHARD HINXMAN, OF CHILLING,

WHO WERE

The Chairman and Seconder at the Meeting of the People of Hampshire on Portsdown Hill, in the Month of February 1817, *to Petition for a Redress of Grievances, and for a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament.*

LETTER IV.

On the Extraordinary Conduct of Sir Francis Burdett, during the last Winter—on his Motion for a Committee—and on his Speech at the Westminster Dinner, on the 23d of May last.

North Hampstead, Long Island, July 23, 1817.

MY WORTHY AND BELOVED FRIENDS,

IN my last I treated of what passed in the Parliament at its *opening* in January last. It was my intention, in this Letter, to go into the history of the proceedings of the *Green-Bag Committee;* but, upon reflection, I choose rather, first to examine, a little, the mysterious part, which our great Leader, SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, acted upon that memorable occasion; and, in the pursuing of this course, I am, in a greater measure, determined by the account which has reached me of *his motion on the subject of Reform of the 20th of May last,* and which motion was precisely the thing which the Reformers disliked, and against which they have uniformly protested for years past, and of which I shall speak more fully by-and-by.

And here let me observe, that the past conduct of no man, however meritorious, ought, for one moment, to be put in competition with the good of our country. It is our duty to examine freely the acts of Sir Francis Burdett as well as the acts of Castlereagh himself. Indeed, the plain truth is this, that a clear statement relative to the conduct of Sir Francis, during the last winter, is absolutely necessary to rescue the character of all the Reformers from the charge of folly approaching to madness. And, it now plainly comes to this: either *he does not belong to us,* or we are *the most inconsistent of human beings,* and our prayers are worthy of not the smallest degree of attention.

I am well aware of the ten thousand calumnies, that the performance of this duty will give rise to. I am aware, that I shall

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be accused of dipping my pen in poison to inflict a deadly wound on the man, whose services to his country I have so often extolled. And, though it be my intention to inflict no wound; though I shall have the most respectful and most kind feelings towards the individual constantly in my heart; though I shall say not one word, which truth, which the good of my country, and which justice to my own character, do not all imperiously call for; though I shall deny myself every aid that I might derive from private communications; though nothing which has passed between Sir Francis and me, or others, *privately*, shall be brought in to enforce any thing that I may have to say; still I am aware that I shall be charged with every thing that the tongue of calumny can utter. But, even this shall never induce me to imitate the *example*, which, in the minds of a great majority of mankind, would fully justify me in making public *all* that has ever passed between us.

I will resort to the statement of no *facts*, which are not already well known to numerous persons, and which the public might not have known as well as I. I shall very clearly, or, at least, as clearly as I am able, give an account of this gentleman's conduct, during the time that I have mentioned; and I shall inquire very freely into the *motives* for that conduct.

That I have *a right* to do this is evident, and I think it will soon appear, that it is a *duty* as well as a right. It is a duty towards myself; but, what is that, compared with the duty, which I owe my country: and which I owe, in a more particular manner to those millions of men, who have read my writings, and who have shown their attachment to me by every mark within their power! But, here again will come the old charge of my "*inconsistency*." My "*change of opinion*" will be again blazoned forth. What change? The change is not in *my opinion*, but, as I shall show, in the conduct of the person spoken of. OTHELLO, in one act of the play, praises IAGO for his honesty, fidelity, and knowledge; but, at the close of the drama, he exclaims: "perfidious, damned IAGO!" No critic has ever thought of accusing OTHELLO of either *inconsistency* or *injustice*. The Merchant, who, to day, confides the keeping of his strong box to his Clerk, and who, tomorrow, accuses him of theft and pursues him to the gallows, is never accused of *inconsistency*. It was IAGO who was inconsistent; it is the Clerk who is inconsistent; and not Othello and the Merchant.

Besides, it is not my intention to deal in *accusations* against Sir Francis Burdett. I impute to him no crimes; I charge him with no perfidy; I insinuate nothing foul against him. His conduct I impute to those weaknesses in man's nature, which the far greater part of mankind will be ready to excuse; but, those weaknesses must be stated, or the character of Reform and of the Reformers must be blackened, which latter, nature as well as reason cry aloud in my heart and tell me, that, if I have the power to prevent it, I ought not to permit. Moreover, my object also is to induce Sir Francis to return to the old path. He has by no means forfeited any portion of my good opinion as far as regards his honesty and his love of the liberties of his country. It is of his *indecision* and his *inconsistency*, of

his *jealousies* and of his *envies*, of which I complain; and of all these a man may, by an effort of which any man is capable, easily cure himself.

The "*good of the cause*," I shall, by some, be told, demands *silence* and oblivion; that the common enemy will be pleased to see this *disunion*. But the disunion *has taken place*, and, this was known to the Boroughmongers, and this it was that rendered them bold. So that the question is simply this: shall the cause of the People be sacrificed to the whims, or the indecision, or the jealousies, or the envies, or any other of the weaknesses of Sir Francis Burdett, or shall it not? I answer in the negative; and upon that ground I now proceed to inquire into his conduct, during the last winter.

It is very notorious, that the Reformers looked up to Sir Francis Burdett as the man who was to be the great advocate of their cause *in parliament*. Indeed, the calls, which he had been making upon *the People*, for so many years, to *come forward in a body*, naturally led to the universal opinion, that he would be transported with joy, when he found, that they had actually come forward in far greater numbers and with demonstrations of greater knowledge, zeal and resolution than he ever could have anticipated. Strange to say, the reverse was the fact, and that in the precise degree, that he perceived the People to wax warm, he appeared to wax cold; and to see nothing but obstacles in the pursuit of that, to the full accomplishment of which he had always declared, that nothing but the hearty and unanimous good will of the People was wanting. While all was life and hope amongst the Reformers, he remained as it were entombed at Brighthelmstone and at Hastings, amidst a circle of that very Standing Army, the bare appearance of which one would have thought was enough to blast his sight.

There he remained until late in December, or, rather, early in January; while millions of men were anxiously looking, from every corner of the country, to know what he meant to do, and how he meant to proceed in bringing forward their cause to a decision. People were surprized, that *no Meeting took place in Westminster*. What! Palace Yard, which had been the very focus of Reform, and which had been sending forth its burning rays so long, NOW, when all the rest of the nation was in a blaze, to become dead and cold as a horse-pond! The holding up of his finger would have produced a Meeting at Westminster. And yet no Meeting took place, though it was very eagerly called for by many most respectable persons, and though an occasion loudly called for it, independent of the cause of Reform; namely, the imprisonment of my LORD COCHRANE. It was anxiously desired, that a *public* Meeting, and not one at *a Tavern*, should have taken place upon that occasion. Preparations were actually made for such a Meeting. Nay, the Requisition for it was sent to the High Bailiff. But, strange to tell, the Meeting dwindled into a Tavern size by the refusal of Sir Francis to attend it. This fact soon became public, and a most injurious effect it had. Lord Cochrane had acquired great and well-founded popularity for his most manly conduct at the London Tavern, when he blew the sinecure-soup project into air.

The *real causes* of his sufferings were now become known to every man; and his gallant perseverance and disregard of suffering had gained him wonderful applause. The *Penny Subscription* set on foot to pay his fine had excited an enthusiasm that never was surpassed, and in which all ranks, except tax-eaters, participated There was never such a Meeting in Westminster as that would have been. And, was it patriotic in Sir Francis to prevent that Meeting? Would *his* popularity have suffered because another man received marks of popularity?

When Sir Francis came to London early in January, *then*, at any rate, we expected to learn what were his precise intentions. In this, however, we were disappointed; though it was impossible for us to believe, that he would not, *at the opening of the Session*, give notice of his intention to *bring in a Bill* for a Reform. The idea of a motion, for the *dozenth* time, for *a Committee* to enquire *about the necessity of a Reform*, was scouted by us all, not only as ridiculous in itself, but as manifestly *deceptious* and *mischievous* in its tendency. But, of this more by and by. We could have no doubt, that *a Bill was intended;* and, though we had great reason to complain of the sluggishness of our Chief, none of us doubted, as yet, that he would, in the distinct terms of a Bill, move for what we wanted, and what we were praying for. It was not more long speeches that we wanted. It was something *to the point;* something that we might *rally round* 'till we obtained our object.

There was, at the period now alluded to, a degree of hope and of enthusiasm, prevailing, such as had never before been witnessed. Like a salamander in the fire, Sir Francis appeared untouched by the blaze of public spirit that shone around him, and the ardour of which was all directed towards himself. He appeared like a lover, who had passed the honey-moon; or, rather like VAINLOVE, in one of CONGREVE's Plays, who, as another character terms it, delighted in *springing the covey*, and then abandoning the sport; for, instead of being at his house in London to answer the numerous eager inquiries of zealous and honest men from all parts of the country, he was, we were told, hunting in Surrey with the hounds of Maberly, the ARMY TAYLOR! This circumstance alone, which I found to have been *truly* stated, was enough to excite *suspicion;* and, it did excite, in my mind, very strong suspicions; or, rather, it confirmed those suspicions, which (for reasons by and by to be stated) I had conceived before he came to London.

As the day for opening the Parliament approached, his house was, of course, more and more resorted to by Reformers from all parts of the country; and, this was precisely the time, these momentous days were precisely those days, which he selected *for spending in Leicestershire a fox-hunting!* Why! I loved the country and hated London quite as cordially as he did. I could have written, too, at Botley, just as well as in London; but, I thought it my duty, or, rather, I *thought* nothing about the matter; I *felt*, that I could not, at such a time, be absent from the place of grand resort without committing something very little short of a crime. If, indeed, he had been fixed in his purpose to *bring in the Bill*, his absence might have been pru-

dent to avoid solicitations on the other side. But, the real motive of so perfectly voluntary an absence became but too apparent in the sequel: that is to say, to avoid our importunities to keep up to the mark of our wishes; a motive which became the more obvious, when it was considered, that he had left his SON, whose illness had 'till then been the ostensible cause of his absence, and had also left all his family, in Sussex, while he took his line of march to the North.

The day of the Meeting of Parliament was now at hand. The Town was crowded with new faces and anxious hearts from all parts of the kingdom. He being absent, and no one being able to tell when he would return, the houses of Major Cartwright and myself became the scenes of inquiry and information. In answer to the eager questions about Sir Francis, we held out a confident reliance upon his coming in time to carry down the Petitions and to give his Notice to move for leave, to bring in a Bill. The Major really expected this, and though I did not, I thought it my duty to hold out *hope* to the last possible moment. In the meanwhile the *Deputies*, called together by a paper, *signed by Sir Francis himself*, met, came to certain resolutions as to what *sort of a Bill* it ought to be; but, at the same time, resolving, that *they had so entire a confidence* in the integrity and wisdom of Sir Francis, that they were willing to leave the *details* of the bill to him.

Day after day passed, and no news from Leicestershire! The eve of the Parliament's Meeting brought no Sir Francis! Nay, the morning brought no comfort; nothing to cheer the half-distracted crowds of bearers of Petitions, who had come up in full expectation of being received by him with open arms, and who longed even for a sight of him. In this state of things, and at about ten o'clock in the morning of the day of opening, I went to Major Cartwright's, who had about a dozen of the bearers of Petitions in the room with him, and who had told them, that he had received a letter from Sir Francis saying that he would be with him that morning, and that he, the Major, expected him to arrive every minute. "Sir," said I, "I will not disguise from these "gentlemen my real opinion. "I have, for some weeks sus- "pected, and I have told *you* "my suspicions, that Sir Fran- "cis Burdett will not give Notice "of a Bill, and that he will make "no great and bold effort in our "cause. And I do not now be- "lieve, that he will call upon you "to-day; I do not believe, that he "will carry down any Petitions "to-day; I do not believe, that "he will make any stand for us in "the House; and I advise these "gentlemen to carry their Peti- "tions to LORD COCHRANE, who, "I have authority to say, will "give Notice of a Bill, if Sir Fran- "cis does not."

The audience were astounded at my words. Many of them had received positive instructions to deliver their petitions *into the hands of Sir Francis Burdett alone*. They were at a loss what to do. But, at last, as many of them as could be found, assembled at Charing-Cross, in the manner described in my last letter to you, and proceeded with their Petitions to the House of LORD COCHRANE, who, as I have there described, was carried into Westminster Hall with the Bristol Petition in his arms, and with the resolution in his mind to give *No-*

tice of a Bill, if Sir Francis Burdett did not.

Here I should observe, that his Lordship, who is *timid* only when there is *no real danger*, and *bold* only *when there is real danger*, for a long time resisted our importunities to give Notice of a Bill, chiefly upon the ground, that it would be done with so much more and so much better effect by his colleague. But, answered we, your Lordship is convinced that it *ought to be done;* that our only chance of success, at this time, depends upon this one act, done in a bold manner; and will you suffer the cause of the People to be deprived of this chance, rather than not do the thing yourself; that People, who have shown so much zeal in *your* cause; who have resented so boldly all your wrongs; who have been ever ready to stand by you to the last? Does your Lordship think it *just*, that the cause should wait the good pleasure, the leisure hours, or the whim of any man living? Do you think, that the thousands of men, any one of whom would do the thing, were they in Parliament, as ably as Sir Francis Burdett, will be satisfied with your declining to do it, merely out of deference to him? Do you think, that *the People* of Westminster, who have placed it in your power to do so much for the country, will be satisfied with your doing nothing, because your colleague will do nothing?

His Lordship was convinced, that it was his duty to do it; and, how he came *not* to do it remains to be explained, and forms the most curious part of this most curious history. When my Lord Cochrane arived in the House, *Sir Francis was there*, and had GIVEN A NOTICE, but, of what *sort* Lord Cochrane could not, probably, distinctly learn. SIR FRANCIS, who, as I had predicted, had *not called upon Major Cartwright*, had taken also such special care not to come in contact with any Reformer, that he actually came *in a straight line from Leicestershire to the door of the Honourable House in a post chaise*, and passed by the end of New Palace Yard just at the time when the thousands of people were carrying Lord Cochrane to the other door of that House! He would naturally expect, from this indication, that his Lordship had been chosen to occupy his place as to *the Bill*, about which we were so anxious; and, *before* his Lordship, who, on account of the crowd, moved slowly, could arrive and take his place, he, Sir Francis, had given *his Notice for a Committee;* that is to say, for what the French call a *parler pour parler*, and what we call *a talk for talk sake;* or, in this case, for a giving the thing *the go-by!* When, therefore, Lord Cochrane, agreeably to his promise, asked Sir Francis whether he was *about to give his notice*, the latter answered, that he *had given it*. After this for Lord Cochrane to give *any* Notice upon the same subject, would have been at once to proclaim a division between them; and, therefore, he did not do it.

I am loath to call this acting the part of the *dog in the manger;* and I beg of you, my good friends, who have been as great admirers of Sir Francis Burdett as any in the kingdom, to give to this act the most mild association of epithets and terms that your justice will permit you to employ. But, willing as I should be to stop short of direct censure, it is impossible for me, without first divesting myself of all feeling for the suffering nation and its cause,

to speak in any terms short of direct censure of the greater part of Sir Francis's conduct subsequent to this epoch.

We have seen, in former letters, that the Prince's Speech had, for its main object, to reprobate the Reformers and to produce *new laws* to *put them down*, or, at least to *reduce them to silence*. The following words, at the close of the speech, could leave no doubt of this in the mind of any man living. I have quoted these words before, but they must find a place here, in order to a clear understanding of what is to follow :— "In considering our internal situation, you will, I doubt not, "feel a *just indignation* at the "*attempts* which have been made "to *take advantage* of the distresses of the country, for the "purpose of exciting a spirit of "*sedition* and *violence*.—I am too "well convinced of the loyalty "and good sense of the *great body* "of his Majesty's subjects, to believe them capable of being *perverted by the arts* which are employed to *seduce* them ; but I am "*determined* to omit no precautions for *preserving the public* "*peace*, and for counteracting the "*designs* of the *disaffected:* and I "rely with the utmost confidence "on *your cordial support and co-operation* in *upholding a system* "*of law and government*, from "which we have derived *inestimable advantages*, which has enabled us to conclude, with unexampled glory, a contest "whereon depended the best interests of mankind, and which "has been hitherto felt by ourselves, as it *is acknowledged by* "*other nations*, to be the most "perfect that has ever fallen "to the lot of *any people*."— Was it not of the very first importance, that these assertions and these propositions, should be *instantly* met with *flat contradiction* and with *decided reprobation*? Did not all the world see, the moment they saw this speech, *what the Ministers were driving at?* Could Sir Francis Burdett, then, have any doubt upon this subject? Must he not have been *certain*, that Gagging Bills were intended in order to silence those, whom he had for many years been *reproaching* for their silence upon this very subject? And yet he suffered *a two-day's debate* upon this speech to pass over, *without ever saying one single word in disapprobation of any part of it!* Though, as every man must have seen, this was the time, and the *only* time, to meet and rebut these unfounded charges against the Reformers, and to give the alarm as to the measures about to be hatched and brought forth. During this long debate there was no species of abuse that was not heaped upon the Reformers; their meetings, their petitions, their speeches, their *publications*. All these were called venomous, seditious, blasphemous, rebellious. And, all this he heard without uttering one single word in our defence! Nay, what is, if possible, worse, he declined, or, rather, *refused*, to say one word in our defence, when a proposition to do so was offered to be brought forward, *and actually was brought forward by another*!

During the debate on the Speech, LORD COCHRANE, seeing no one willing to make a stand, or even to utter a word, in our defence, and knowing, as every man must have known, what the close of the Speech aimed at, moved the following amendment to the address. "That this House has taken a "view of the public proceedings, "throughout the country, by "those persons, who have met to "petition for a Reform of this "House, and that, in justice to "those persons as well as to the

"people at large, and for the "purpose of convincing the peo- "ple that this House wishes to "entertain and encourage no "misrepresentation of their ho- "nest intentions, this House "with great humility, beg leave "to assure his Royal Highness, "that they have not been able to "discover one single instance, in "which meetings to petition for "Parliamentary Reform have been "accompanied with any attempt "to disturb the public tranquil- "lity; and this House further "beg leave to assure his Royal "Highness, that, in order to pre- "vent the necessity of those rigo- "rous measures, which are con- "templated in the latter part of "the Speech of his Royal High- "ness, this House will take into "their early consideration the "propriety of abolishing sine- "cures and unmerited pensions "and grants, the reduction of the "civil list, and of all salaries "which are now disproportion- "ate to the services, and es- "pecially, that they will take into "their consideration the Reform "of this House, agreeably to the "laws and constitution of the "land, this House being decided- "ly of opinion that justice and "humanity, as well as policy, "call, at this time of universal "distress, for measures of con- "ciliation, and not of rigour, "towards a people who have "made so many and such great "sacrifices, and who are now "suffering, in consequence of "those sacrifices, all the calami- "ties with which a nation can "be afflicted."

Now, though it is very well known that this amendment would not have been *carried*, it is also well known, that a debate would have grown out of it, in which debate would have come naturally under review all the conduct of the Reformers, all their Petitions and Publications, and that *here* might have been fought a glorious battle against the intended measures. In short, if this battle had been fought by Sir Francis Burdett with resolution and boldness, the Ministers would have been checked at the out-set. The People would have been encouraged; they would have petitioned against the measures that followed upon the heels of the Speech; and, I verily believe, that the State Dungeons would now have been empty, and that I should not have been in exile. But, instead of *fighting a battle* upon these grounds so fair and so advantageous, Sir Francis Burdett *did not even second the motion*, so that it dropped dead without ever being put from the chair! And what was his excuse for not having seconded this motion, upon which, perhaps, the liberties of the country hung? Why, that he was out in the gallery when it was put, and was *going home*. This he told you, People of Westminster, in Palace Yard; but, he did not tell you, that *he had seen the motion before*, and that he *knew it was going to be made!* True he was absent when the motion was made; but WHY was he absent?

This is not the way, in which Sir Francis Burdett has been *treated by the* PEOPLE. He has been put into Parliament by a subscription, not of the RUSSELLS and others, of whose acquaintance and support he now boasts, but of the Reformers *all over England!* Did the people treat him thus, when he stood for Middlesex? Did they treat him thus, when he was sent to the Tower; or, when he came out of the Tower? Have they ever abandoned him for one single moment? Have they ever drawn off *from him*, when his enemies have called *him* violent and seditious? And, as to the *publications* of the Reformers,

which he tacitly suffered to be loaded with every species of abuse, has *he* ever been *abandoned by those publications?* Have those publications ever been *silent*, when *he* was an object of calumny? Yet he could sit out two whole debates silent as a mouse in a cheese, while these publications were represented as "*venom*," and while their authors were marked out as fit objects for the dungeon! Let us hope, if we can, that his future conduct may be such as to cause this to be *forgiven;* but I frankly avow, that, by me, it can never be *forgotten*. I refrain from imputing this silence, upon such an occasion, to *ingratitude*, because that is the blackest of crimes; but, to *what* am I to impute it? To talk of "*indolence;*" to talk of "*sluggishness;*" to talk of "*inadvertence;*" to talk of any of these, in such a case, is to insult common sense in the manner the most gross. The poor creatures in the Black-Hole of Calcutta were obliged to submit to suffocation, because the Vizir was *asleep*, and no one dared to disturb his repose! But, was it thus, that the People of England were to suffer, because Sir Francis Burdett, who owed them so much, was not disposed to open his mouth? When charged with this neglect of duty, at a subsequent Meeting in Palace Yard, he said, that he had often heard of Members being blamed for what they *had done;* but that he never before heard of any Member being censured *for what he had not done*. No: but, surely, he must often have heard of men being not only *blamed*, but *punished*, for *not having done* certain things; and he will find, I believe, that *not to denounce* a treason, of which we have knowledge, is a crime punishable with death by the law of the land. So that this was an attempt to parry the charge by a mere turn of expression. What! in the catalogue of offences against our country, does no such thing as *a neglect of duty* find a place? And, when Sir Francis Burdett was elected for Westminster, did not the patriotic people of that City, expect him to *do something* for them? Yes, they expected him to be the great champion of the cause of liberty, and more especially of the cause of Reform. Was not this the case? Will any man deny, that this was the ground of all our exertions, our votes and subscriptions? And, was he not bound, then, to act agreeably to this clearly understood compact; or, to resign his seat? He cannot give us a Reform of the Parliament. I know that very well. Our plan of Reform, though standing upon the very principles, which he has so long inculcated, he might not *now* approve of. But, could he not have opened his lips in defence of our conduct, when that conduct was so perfectly legal, that the Law Officers of the Crown, with their two pair of sharp eyes, could find nothing in that conduct to prosecute? Well! but suppose us Reformers to have become *too violent* for his more sober years. Was the personal freedom of all the rest of the nation of consequence not sufficient to call forth a word from him? He did oppose the Bills *afterwards;* and so did *Lord Milton*, who was one of the Green Bag Committee, and who voted for *new laws* in that Committee. Oh, no! It was not *subsequent harangues* that were wanted. It was a gallant fight at the outset; and, besides, never, from first to last, though such numerous opportunities were offered, did he utter *one single syllable in our defence;* but, on the contrary, by dealing in vague generalities, seemed to allow, *that our conduct was not to be defended.* Let us hope, my good friends in

England, that we shall live to see the day, when we shall not stand in need of *him* for a defender! If he did not toss us down to be worried by the Ministers, he, at any rate, stood and looked on as an uninterested Spectator.

Doubtless, there would have been Bills of *some sort* passed, in spite of all that he could have done. But, is it likely, that, if he had fought our battle, in the manner that it might have been fought, and that he was so well able to fight it; is it likely, that if this had been done, *the same* measures would have been proposed? At any rate, he was in a place where he *dared speak out;* where he ran *no risk* in describing those measures in their true colours; where he could have proposed *Resolutions*, which he was *sure* would be *seconded;* and where he could have placed upon indelible record the infamous conduct of our enemies. And, was it not a neglect of an imperious duty *not to do this?* There were hundreds of those men, whom he thus abandoned to the rage of the Boroughmongers, who would have done all this, and more than all this, and who would have done it *well too.* This he knows; and sorry I am to say, that I believe, that this knowledge led him to see without any great regret, if not with inward satisfaction, *any measures* adopted that were calculated to keep those men from being his competitors for popularity and for renown.

Other motives have been ascribed; but we shall find, I believe, upon a fair examination of his conduct, that all the indications of those other motives resolve themselves into so many concurrent presumptive proofs of this all-devouring and destructive motive. It was, indeed, subject of wonder and of astonishment, when his only son became an officer in that very standing army, against the practices in which, and against the very existence of which, the father had, all his life long, been so loudly inveighing. For my part, when I first heard of the fact, I treated it as one of the lies of the day, intended for twenty four hours, to injure the character of Sir Francis. What, then, was my astonishment; what was my sorrow, when I not only found that his son was in the Standing Army, but, that he was in *the Prince's own Regiment*, and serving under one of those very *German Officers*, to employ whom in such a capacity *is notoriously a daring violation of the law!* Had the son, led away by the military madness of the day, and, possibly, decoyed by some of his companions amongst the aristocracy, who would materially wish to give pain to, and excite suspicions respecting the father, dashed into the ranks *in time of war*, in search of "honourable scars"—Even in that case, the circumstance must have awakened some degree of suspicion. But, here is a joining of *the Standing Army in time of peace*, the very *existence* of which the father has reprobated in every term of reprobation. The commission might, *possibly*, be dated before the close of the war; but, Mr. Burdett did not join his regiment till peace; and, besides, there was no law to compel him to remain in it, and to be liable to be ordered out, at any moment, to draw his sword, and order his men to fire, upon the People. This very young man, when six years younger, saw his father dragged from his house, and escorted to the Tower, by a part of this very Standing Army. Nay, the youth himself accompanied the father in the same coach, on that memorable occasion. We were, at that time told, in the public prints, that,

"at the moment when the soldiers "forced the doors of the house, "Sir Francis was standing *reading Magna Charta* to his son "*in Latin*." One would have thought, that these circumstances would have been imprinted in the mind and on the heart of this young man to his latest breath. One would have thought, that he would have begged his bread from door to door, rather than have served in that same Standing Army, and that, too, under the sway of the very same set of Ministers.

But, you will say, "might not "the son enter the army without "the father's consent, and even "in spite of his remonstrances?" Undoubtedly he might, and, though I *know nothing of the matter*, I really believe, that the step never received the father's consent. The account, which some very zealous political friends of Sir Francis give of the matter is this. They say, that the wife of COUTTS, the Banker, who is Sir Francis's Father-in-law, obtained the consent of the *Duke of York* to dine at her house, along with a parcel of his army-people, as a sort of giving the sanction to the *Great* to visit her, she having lately quitted the avocation of play-actress, and having, from ardour of affection, no doubt, married COUTTS not many days (less than twenty, I believe) after the mother of Lady Burdett was cold. Whether this scheme of introducing her to the *Great* succeeded, or not, I never inquired; though I should rather suppose, that it did not, seeing what numerous news-paper paragraphs we have read in praise of the Lady's *acts of charity*, which acts, of course, the sharp-sighted news-paper people discovered of themselves, and blazoned forth to the world from a mere sense of morality and religion, and without the smallest desire of ever being *paid* for the insertion. Oh, Lord! no! Not they! But, whether the scheme succeeded or not; or whether there really ever was such a scheme, I am not certain: but, of the *fact* of the Duke of York's *visits* the news-papers took care to inform us in as prominent a way as even Mrs. Coutts herself could have wished. These vehicles informed us, too, that Lady Burdett and Sir Francis did *not* visit the new Mother-in-law; but, that Sir Francis's *son did visit her*, and, it is generally understood, that that son, who is the heir at law to Sir Francis's title, and to a great part of his immense estates, is also to be the possessor of the far greater part of Coutts's perhaps a half million of money; but, this, of course, must depend wholly on the pleasure of Coutts, or, perhaps, partly on that of Mrs. Coutts.

Now, it is said by the friends of Sir Francis (for I never heard a word from his lips on the subject), that, at one of these visits of the Duke, the *Commission* was offered to Mr. Burdett, and that he accepted of it without his father's consent, and even without his knowledge. All which is so natural and so probable, that I never hesitated, for one moment, to give it my entire belief. It is so obvious, that the Duke of York and even the Prince, whose consent must have been obtained, because he is the Colonel of the Regiment, would wish to have this young man *in their hand*, that there needs not one word on the subject of the *reasons* for that wish. And, on the other hand, it is impossible not to see thousands of reasons for Sir Francis's shuddering at this destination of his only son.

As we are proceeding upon the supposition of a *non-consenting* father, we must carry along with us the idea of an *undutiful son*. Yet, let us not judge too hastily. The advice of a

woman, who had been able so completely to subdue the heart, and, what is more, open the hand, of a thrifty banker in, I believe, the seventy ninth year of his age, together with the affable kindness of Royalty, whose notice, even in the way of a bare look, so many covet, may well be thought too powerful for the head of almost any young man of fashion. Therefore, when Mr. Burdett was, in consequence of his fall from a gig, lying, as was supposed, at death's door at Brighton, it was natural for his father to fly to him, however much he might be displeased with his conduct; for, if we can, as I sincerely do, see fair ground of apology for this young man, how readily, and especially at such a moment, would apologies crowd into the mind of a tender father! And a father, too, who, in spite of his apparent coldness, yields, I am well persuaded, to very few men in the world in kindness of heart. Speaking of him as a man in private life, there never was a more sincerely compassionate man than Sir Francis Burdett. There is no suffering creature for whom he does not feel. To regard, therefore, his long continuance in the hated Barracks at Brighton, where he had a child to be saved from death; to regard this as an indication of his having consented to his son becoming part of the Standing Army in time of peace, is to be guilty of great injustice. Nor, while his son's life was in danger, do I think that any blame attached to him for his total neglect of all public affairs. If we readily excuse a Labouring man for being absent from *his* work, when he has a child at the point of death, why should we not excuse Sir Francis Burdett, whose mind must have been wholly taken up with this one object? Therefore, every unfavourable conclusion, drawn from this absence at Brighton, I set down as unjust, except in as much as that absence was continued long after Mr. Burdett was recovered, and a part of the time of which continued absence, as the news-papers informed us, was occupied in the diversion of *hunting with the Prince's hounds*, while the Reformers, in all parts of the country were in motion, and were burning with impatience to know what measures Sir Francis had resolved on, in order, that all might pull together, as offering the only ground of hope of success.

This absence, and the total *silence* that accompanied it gave rise to many suspicions, and the circumstance of the son's being *in the army*, and in the Prince's own regiment, was now dwelt upon by every one as a symptom of a fatal change in the father's mind; for, in the distant parts of the country, the honest Reformers knew no more about Coutts and his Wife than they did about the Old Man in the moon; nor, indeed, quite so much; for they did know, that they had heard their grandmothers say, that there was such a man as the man in the moon, and they had never heard that there was such a man as Coutts. They judged, as they naturally would, and as they had a right to do, from the *naked fact*. They had undoubted proof, that Sir Francis Burdett's son was gone into the Standing Army; they found Sir Francis absent, hunting with the Prince's hounds, and silent as to the subject of Reform. And how were they to draw any *other* conclusion, than that he had given his consent to the taking of a commission by his son?

Ready as I am to acquit Sir Francis of having given this consent; ready as I am to apologize for the conduct of his son, I must not, however, forget, that there is a duty here which was due from Sir Francis to his country, regarding, as he did, the cause of Reform the cause of his country. It was his duty, and his bounden duty, *to make known to the nation*, that he had *not given his consent*. Will he say, that the *public* had *no right* to demand an account of any of his *family affairs?* This would be going very far, even if the affair was a *family* one. For, it is possible to suppose a case, in which a mere family affair might be deeply interesting to a public cause. Suppose, for instance, Castlereagh were to become a widower, and that Sir Francis, (God forgive me for the supposition!) were to bestow the hand of one of his daughters upon the Noble Viscount! This would be

purely a family affair. And yet I imagine, that no one will attempt to deny, that the People must be extremely doltish, if they thought it of no consequence to them. Suppose my two eldest sons were now to go to England, and that one of them were to become under secretary to Sidmouth and the other one of his Police Justices, and were, as, of course, they would, to set to work to carry the Gagging Bills into execution; and, suppose I were to remain *silent* upon the subject. What would *you*, my goods friends, think of *me?* I dare not attempt to describe your *thoughts;* but, I know, that the utmost stretch of your kindness would be required to induce you to content yourselves with *saying*, that I should do well to say not another word about my love of country, 'till this mysterious matter was cleared up. Well, then, if this is what the kindest of my kind friends would say *to me;* in virtue of what moral principle, of what rule of right, of what exemption or privilege known amongst men, is *the nation* not to *say the same* to Sir Francis Burdett? But, still the cases are, by no means analogous. The nation's claim upon Sir Francis is far, very far, superior to any claim that even any portion of the nation has upon me. You, my good friends, and all my countrymen in a body, have a claim upon me for that attachment, which is due to my country, and which unsophisticated nature bids every man bear towards his country; and this attachment you have a right to call upon me to shew by the exertion of my talents, as far as is consistent with the safety of myself and my family. But, besides this claim, which the nation has upon all of us, the whole nation, and the Reformers in particular, have special and peculiar claims upon Sir Francis Burdett, who has entered into a *positive compact* with them; who has been supported in his public character by their votes and by their subscriptions, and who, in return, has a thousand times pledged himself to maintain their cause. I am bound by no such ties; and yet, in the case above supposed, you would, I am sure, regard an explanation from me as a bounden duty. All I ask, therefore, is, that, in taking the most lenient course, you will decide on the conduct of Sir Francis Burdett, in this respect, as you would decide on my conduct.

As to the story, in January, about Sir Francis being about to be *called up* to the House of Peers, or, at least, that, in case of his refusal, his Lady was to become a Countess in her own right with remainder to her son, it was a story, which, though never publicly contradicted, I never, for one moment, believed; for, as old WHITFIELD once told his congregation, "no man *prays to be damned;*" and, as for *forcing* the thing upon him, or upon Lady Burdett, as BOILEAU'S bishop flung his blessing, out of *pure spite*, at a Jesuit, who had crept under a bench in the church in order to avoid it, the thing was too ridiculous not to make the nation choak with laughter.

Nevertheless I do believe, that the courtly air of Brighton had *some* effect upon Sir Francis. The very purlieus of a court Barrack are pestilential as to political principle. Surrounded by crafty courtiers in the garb of frank and thoughtless military officers. Listening to the praises bestowed on a beloved son, about whose health he was so anxious; and receiving, perhaps, personal condolence from the Prince himself. Under such circumstances, and in moments of incaution, men commit themselves before they reflect on what they are doing, and they are, by slow degrees, led to do things, which they would, at first, have shuddered but to think of. It was just at this moment, that the blaze of Reform bursted forth; and that, in every part of the country, knowledge and talent seemed to be possessed by almost every man that opened his lips at a public meeting.

Sir Francis Burdett is a *sensible* man. No man's character was ever more misunderstood generally than his. He is a sober, reflecting, and even profound man; and his love to his country would be exceeding that of any man I ever knew, except the

brave Old Major Cartwright, were it not for his ill-judged ambition. This ambition will suffer *no competitor*, and especially in the capacity of *orator*, in which he falls beneath so many, many hundreds. I forget, who it is that writes a fable about the thanks-givings of the animals to Jupiter. The Peacock returned thanks for his *sweet voice*, the hog for his *cleanliness*, the viper for his *harmless nature*; and so on. And, it does frequently happen, that nature, in her freaks, makes men so perverse as to think little of the talents which they really possess, and to think unconsionably highly of talents, in which every one but themselves can see that they are deficient.

It has always been the passion of Sir Francis Burdett to be *at head*, and not only at the head, but to have *no degrees of approach towards him*, and especially in the capacity of Speech-maker, a talent beneath notice, when compared with the great and solid powers of mind which he possesses. To hear him by the side of his breakfast table; to hear the fine and consequent reasoning, the profound remarks, and the simple and strong language that comes from his lips; and, in a few hours afterwards to find all this as it were wholly forgotten, and to hear him labouring 'till he is out of breath, in the utterance of sentences two minutes long, each containing in its belly two or three parenthesises, and each of these two or three little ones one within another, as SWIFT calls it, "like a nest of pill-"boxes," while the sentence closes, at last, without any memory being able to collect its ideas into any rational point or conclusion, and leaving no other impression upon the minds of his hearers, than that which is produced by declamatory rant; to hear him thus, in these two different situations, is enough to make any sensible man avoid the rock of misguided ambition. Sir Francis Burdett may be well assured, whatever some persons may say to this, that this is the opinion of every man, who is sincerely enough his friend to lament his misconception of his talents. I could name a score off hand, who have expressed precisely the same opinion. But, why did I never say this *before?* If any one asks this silly question, my answer is, that these are things which brothers do not say to brothers; and, as to saying it *to the public*, one reason, amongst a thousand others, is, that it would have done harm to our cause. Nor should I have said it now, if I had not regarded the saying it as necessary to our own defence in explaining the real motives of him, by whom we have been abandoned.

This propensity to shine as the one great man and great speech-maker has led to all that I complain of. He saw, that a blaze of talent had burst forth. He saw, that, if a Reform really took place, he would be *nothing* in that line of talent. He could not endure the idea of standing amidst a crowd of second or third rates. Therefore he began to halt. To consider. To hesitate. To damp. We were going *too fast;* we exceeded *his bounds*, who, before, had *no bounds*. Till now he had been the undisputed chief; that pleased him well, and he zealously and sincerely strove for the victory. But, when he found the victory, if won, would leave him a disputed truncheon, he stopt short; and left us to the mercy of our foes, choosing rather to eke out his life as the *chief* of an unsuccessful, than to live an *associate* in a successful, cause.

Let us hope, that he will be disappointed in the former, and that his conduct will be such as to give him a large share of his country's gratitude in the accomplishing of the latter. But, if I am to judge from his recent conduct; that is to say, his prominent acts since I left England, there is, I am sorry to say it, very little ground for such hope. These acts are his motion of the 20th of May, for *a Committee* of the whole House to *inquire* on the subject of Reform. I observed before, that this was a measure against which the Reformers all *protested* in the most decided manner. Indeed, we were of opinion, that such a step would amount to a tacit abandonment of our cause. For, what did such a motion argue? Why, that *we doubted*,

or, that there was *room for doubt*, upon the subject. When we all declared, that the justice of our demand was "*as notorious as the Sun at noonday.*" And *he?* What had *he* said to justify his motion of *inquiry?* He had a thousand times publicly declared, in the House, as well as out of it, that it was *notoriously no representative of the People.* He had said, that he hated to go to the House for two reasons: first, because he disliked *bad company*, and next because he disliked *late hours.* He had told the people in Palace Yard, that they ought never to call it by the *name* of the House of Commons; and in his speeches in that same Palace Yard, he called it "the *Room* over the way," loading the whole body indiscriminately with every epithet and term expressive of baseness in them and of abhorrence in him! Nay, he had even gone so far as distinctly to recommend to the people "*not to petition* the *Room*" any longer, seeing that the said Room consisted of "a *band* of *notorious Oligarchs*". Was it not, then, an insult to the People, after all this to move this same "*Room*" to form itself into a Committee to *inquire* relative to the subject of Reform! It was about fourteen years that he had been, occasionally, making these talk-for-talk's sake motions; and the Reformers thought it high time to see something clear and specific proposed, especially as they had always been told, that no one could tell *what it was they wanted.* His reason (the only one that I ever heard of) for preferring the motion for a Committee was, that it would be *presumption* in him to attempt to dictate to the *House* what sort of a Reform should be adopted. What! "the *Room*" become "the *House*" all at once, and a body, too, so respectable and so wise (as evinced by the happy result of its 25 years measures, I suppose) as to make it presumption in him to appear to dictate to them, though it is done two or three hundred times in every session; that is to say, every time *any* member moves for leave to bring in *any Bill.* But, what was well worthy of remark, while his modesty prevented him from risking the imputation of dictating to "the "*Room*," it was not sufficient to prevent him from dictating to *the People*, whom he had formerly taught to despise "the Room." A million and a half of men asked for *a Bill* and for *Universal Suffrage;* and he made a motion *for a Committee* and would stop at *the Suffrage of Householders;* so there was he, who had hundreds and hundreds of times declared, that the People ought to *instruct* their representatives, presenting petitions and acting *in open defiance* of the prayers of those Petitions!

It is said (for the paper containing the report of the debate has not yet reached me, though papers to the 24th of May have,) that he had *one third of the Members present* to vote with him *for a Committee.* To be sure he had! This just suited his views and also the views of the Ministers. He wanted support at the end of a long speech, and they wanted the appearance of a fair discussion of the question, and a delusive procrastination put into practice. "Oh, well! Come! "*one third* vote with Sir Francis. "*More* will vote with him, perhaps, "another time. If 14 years of mo- "tions give *one third*, another eight "years (only eight years!) will pro- "duce a *majority!*" When old canting John talked of his "crums of "comforts for the chickens of the "Covenant," he was answered by a fellow in the Aisle of the Chapel, by an observation, that it would be much better to give them the whole loaf at once. "No," said John, "for chickens "are very silly things, and would "not know what to do with it." So appears Sir Francis to think of the Reformers. But, I can assure him and the Boroughmongers too, that the People are not *now* to be deluded and noodled along by any such means. The People know as well as he does, that the voting for *a Committee* is not voting for *a Reform;* but that, in fact, it is voting *against a Reform;* and, when we come to look at the list of this famous *one third*, we shall find it chiefly composed of Boroughmongers, or the heirs or representa-

tives of Boroughmongers; and, that there were but *two* or *three* men, who would really vote for *a Reform*. Nay, I am sure I shall find men voting for *the Committee*, who, in their speeches reprobated the Reformers, and declared their abhorrence of what alone *we call Reform*. What a despicable farce, then, was the exhibition upon this occasion! And how heartily must the People despise it!

The other prominent Act, to which I have alluded above, is Sir Francis's Speech at the Westminster Dinner on the 23d of May, being the anniversary of his first election for Westminster. This Dinner, of the *original occasion* of which I shall another time, perhaps, find it necessary to give the real history, and as to which I shall only say, at present, that a full proof was then given, that Sir Francis would possess no eminence as the *associate of another*; this Dinner is ordered and arranged by a Committee of persons, who are in the constant practice of consulting Sir Francis as to all their acts in that capacity. Therefore, last year, when I made, at this Dinner, a sort of proposition to defeat the intrigue going on between the Committee and Mr. Brougham, and which did defeat it too, I thought it necessary to say to Sir Francis before we went into the dining-room: "I am "going to do something, and if I do "not tell you what it is, it is because "I wish to keep you clear of being a "party to it, and to beg that you will "do in it just what you please, with-"out any considerations with regard "to myself."

Upon looking over these Dinner Proceedings again, I perceive that I cannot do justice to them in the remnant of a letter. I will, therefore, reserve them for another Number, in my next Letter to you; and shall only add here, that nothing in the world would give me so much satisfaction as to find, that Sir Francis Burdett's *protection of the imprisoned men*, or their families, has compensated, in some degree, for his abandonment of us all. But, that protection, to satisfy me, must be *real* and *efficient*. Vague, declamatory speeches, however long and however loud, are not the things that are wanted. What *ought* to be done, I have pointed out in my last number: what is there proposed is barely what justice demands: it is in the power of *any* Member of Parliament, who has two thousand pounds and who has very moderate talents; and, if it be not done by this gentleman, I shall entertain not the smallest hope of any thing good from him.

I am always your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. I have *now* just received English Papers *to the 29th of May*. But, I am told, that papers of the *9th or 10th of June* have been received at Philadelphia, and that they give an account of the acquittal of Mr. WOOLER, the author of "the *Black Dwarf*." If the circumstances are correctly stated to me, this is a most glorious triumph indeed, in more respects than one. It shows, that, where a *jury* is ventured upon, all is not yet lost. It shows, that the *public* feeling is not yet wholly benumbed. Those *jurymen*, whose honoured names I am anxious to see, deserve more at our hands than ten thousand makers of flaming and vague and pointless and fruitless harangues. The event is, too, of vast importance as Mr. WOOLER is, it appears, another of the "*Lower Orders*." I am told that he *is* a printer, and has been a common *sailor*, as I was a common *soldier*. His defence, I am told, was a most noble one and also a most able one. His being angry with *me* for what his anxiety led him to view as a "*desertion*" I excuse; and, I hope, that he is before now convinced, that I took the patriotic as well as the prudent course. Be this as it may, I hold his exertions and his talents in honour; and, I trust, that he is destined to see insolent pride and powerful cruelty crouching at his feet. He has youth, and, if he take care of his health, this he will certainly live to see.

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COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

NOTICE.

The Communication intended for the present Number is *postponed*, in order to expedite the publication of Mr. COBBETT'S *Petition to the House of Commons*. This Petition was offered to Lord FOLKESTONE, with a view to its being presented to the House; but his Lordship, after perusal, returned it: at the same time giving permission to state, that the uniform, or, at least, usual *rejection* of Petitions, when extending through several sheets of paper, was his only reason for declining to present it.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The Petition of William Cobbett, of Botley, in the County of Hants, now residing at North Hampstead, in the State of New York, this 20th day of November, 1817,

Humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioner, always tremblingly alive to those feelings of respect, reverence and awe, which the character and conduct of your Honourable House are so well calculated to excite and perpetuate in the breasts of all mankind, could not, though thereunto urged by a sense of imperious duty, have been induced thus to venture to beseech even one moment's attention from your Honourable House, had he not been sustained by reflecting on the well-known indulgent and benign deportment of your Honourable House towards all his Majesty's subjects, and more especially towards those who approach you with their petitions.

Your Petitioner, though living in safety and happiness; though in no danger of arbitrary arrests; though in no danger of changing his house for a dungeon and his own clothes for a criminal's garb; though surrounded by his family who can lay their heads on their pillows unhaunted by the apprehension of seeing him no more; though there is no fiscal extortioner to wrest from him his money, and no spy to sell his blood: though thus happily situated, under the protection of a

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Government, founded on the Common Law of England, and carried on by men, amongst whom bribery, corruption, vote-selling and seat-selling, are not only not as notorious as the sun at noon day, but are wholly unknown and almost unintelligible in point of meaning; though, as the natural consequence of this just and wise Government, your humble Petitioner sees around him no starvation, no beggary, and scarcely hears he of any of those acts which the law regards as crimes; though his eyes are never shocked by those erections, exhibitions and circumstances inseparable from the ignominious exit of malefactors, and though his ears are never annoyed and his heart wounded by the cries of the fatherless children and the widows of men, who have sought shelter from the shame of pecuniary ruin in death inflicted by their own hands; though, in short, your Petitioner is in the midst of a state of things, where all is order, content, peace and good will, yet the calamities of his native country are ever present to his mind, and that true and faithful allegiance which he bears to his lawful king, together with the unalterable attachment which he bears to his country, impel him to submit to your Honourable House his opinions as to the causes of those calamities and his prayer as to the remedy to be adopted, all which, however, he does with sentiments of deference the most complete and of humility the most profound.

Powerful as are the motives, by which your Petitioner is actuated, the contemplation of the dignified character and of the renowned wisdom of your Honourable House produces in his mind so complete a conviction of his utter insignificance, that it would be altogether impossible for him to support himself under the thought of becoming an object of the displeasure or contempt of your Honourable House, a thought, however, which is, happily for him, wholly removed from his mind by that great indulgence, that kind condescension, that extreme candour, that charitableness of interpretation, that scorn to listen to abuse of persons who have no power to answer, that magnanimous disdain of taking advantage of involuntary error, that fairness in representing, that abhorrence of foul play, and that more-than-maternal tenderness for a petitioning people, which have, as the nation and the world so well know, invariably marked the pro-

ceedings of your Honourable House.

Emboldened by reflecting on these facts, not less important to him than they are notorious throughout the world, your Petitioner, though still filled with a sense of his insufficiency for the performance of so arduous a duty, will, with all humility, proceed to submit to your Honourable House his opinions as to the principal causes of the calamities, under which his native country is now suffering, calamities which have already swept away whole classes of the community, and which, if not speedily arrested in their course, appear to your Petitioner likely to produce a total dissolution of society.

In pursuance of this object your Petitioner humbly begs to be permitted to state to your Honourable House, that he has seen, in documents of high authority, but to which documents, from his profound respect for the sacred privileges of Parliament, he refrains from directly referring; in these documents your humble Petitioner has seen, that the calamities of the nation have, in great part, at least, been traced back to the *Poor-Laws*, operating, as here laid down, so as to create a *redundant population*, a population exceeding a proportionate exertion of labour and production of food.

Your Petitioner most humbly beseeches your Honourable House to permit him to express his surprize, that this doctrine should have ventured to show its face, while the Statute Book of your Honourable House proves, that the Poor-Laws have existed nearly three hundred years, and while the facts are undeniable, that, during those three hundred years the nation has, for long spaces of time, enjoyed the highest degree of prosperity, and that, until now, a redundant population has never been regarded as amongst the effects of that now-reprobated code; and, if your Petitioner be indulged by your Honourable House in a permission to express his surprize as to this novelty, he fears not that your Honourable House will refuse to permit him to express his astonishment, and, if he may presume, in your presence, to exercise such a feeling, even his indignation, at the doctrine of an augmented and augmenting population being an *evil*, when it is well known, that the records of your Honourable House contain volumes upon volumes of details, collected and arranged at great expence, to establish the fact of a

greatly augmented and augmenting population, as an incontestible proof of greatly augmented and augmenting national prosperity, wealth, and power.

With not less surprize, and with scarcely less indignation, can your Petitioner hear the calamities of the country ascribed to a surplus of mouths exceeding the quantity of the produce of the exertion of labour, when not only is your Petitioner sure that your Honourable House is well aware, that the food produced by the labour of one labourer is, on an average, more than sufficient to sustain a hundred persons, but when the Statute Book and other Records of your Honourable House, of not more than twenty months standing, prove to the world, that your Honourable House imputed all the distresses of the country to a superabundant quantity, not of mouths, but of food; and that, upon this very ground, clearly and formally expressed in several solemn Reports, your Honourable House proceeded to pass, and actually did pass, and now keep in force, a law, the real as well as the avowed object of which was to raise the price, by diminishing the quantity, of human food.

Impotent as is your Petitioner, feeble as is his voice, insignificant as he knows his means to be, he, nevertheless, humbly begs to be allowed to express his hope, that your Honourable House will not disdain and treat with scorn the jealousy which he feels for the consistency, nay, for the common sense, of your Honourable House, at which qualities in your Honourable House these new doctrines appear to your humble Petitioner to be aiming a mortal blow; for, though your Petitioner is too well aware that the wisdom of your Honourable House is invulnerable to all sorts of assault, yet the pride with which, as an Englishman, he must necessarily contemplate the spotless character of your Honourable House, and the zeal which he feels for your renown, urge him to resent, with all the hostile feelings of his heart, the affront offered to your Honourable House in the formal and authoritative promulgation of doctrines directly at war with the records and acts of your Honourable House.

Were it the misfortune of your humble Petitioner to be addressing himself to an assembly ignorant of such subjects from the nature of its component parts, or rendered such by a disregard of every thing not connected with the gratification of a desire to amass pri-

vate wealth by base and corrupt means; were your humble Petitioner addressing himself to an assembly of this low and disgraceful description, he should think it necessary to endeavour to prove the absolute impossibility of the Poor-Laws and of a Surplus of Mouths having produced the calamities under contemplation; but, having the good fortune to be addressing himself to your Honourable House, not less famed for your profound knowledge of all the various branches of political science than for your extreme disinterestedness and matchless purity, he dares not to seem to suppose such proof to be necessary, more especially as all the propositions of the innovators alluded to stand decidedly negatived in the Reports, the Resolutions, and in the venerated Acts, of your Honourable House; and, therefore, your Petitioner will, without longer trespassing on the great indulgence of your Honourable House, proceed, though with inexpressible deference and humility, to submit to your Honourable House a brief exposition of what he deems to have been, and to be, the real immediate causes of the nation's calamities, of which calamities your humble Petitioner and his family bear their full proportionate burthen.

Your Petitioner is confident, that your Honourable House will not withhold your candid and ready acquiescence from the following undeniable propositions; to wit: That the Poor-Laws continued in operation, from their first enactment, two hundred and seventy years, without producing, and without having imputed to them, any national calamity;—that, in all ages, there have been alternately times of scarcity and times of plenty, times of high price and times of low price, and that never, until now, a *want of employment* accompanied adverse seasons any more than favourable seasons;—that it is manifest, that the want of employment, which is the great symptom of the present national disease, and which is altogether peculiar to the present times, has not arisen from bad seasons, or high prices of food, it being notorious that it began to be severely experienced in 1814, and has continued to increase, under all circumstances of good seasons as well as of bad seasons, and of low prices as well as of high prices;—that, in 1815, the advocates for the Corn Bill all proceeded upon the principle, taken by them for granted, that the *low price* of farm produce was the cause of the

want of employment and of the national distress;—that, the Board of Agriculture, and that a Committee of your Honourable House, made reports containing an assertion of this principle;—that the numerous Reports made to the Board of Agriculture to prove, that want of employment, a great increase of pauperism, and wide ruin amongst farmers and traders, had taken place along with a great reduction in the price of food;—that it was then held, by all those who sought the enactment of a Corn Bill, that high prices were necessary in order to remove the *prevalent want of employment*, and in order to diminish pauperism and to prevent the total ruin of landlords, farmers, and traders;—and that, it was upon the ground of these principles and of the evidence produced in support of their truth, that your Honourable House passed the Corn Bill, the real as well as the declared object of which was to raise and keep up the price of the produce of the land.

To these propositions, which are altogether undeniable, your Petitioner begs leave to add some others, to the truth of which he also believes your Honourable House will not hastily refuse your assent; to wit: that, though it be possible, that the case may in nature occur, that national calamity may arise from a superabundance of population, such calamity can never arise from this cause while the already-enclosed lands of the country are imperfectly cultivated;—that the already enclosed lands of the kingdom admit of a great quantity of additional labour being profitably employed upon them;—that this proposition has been maintained in several Reports sanctioned by your Honourable House;—and that, therefore, it is an obvious conclusion, that it is not the want of materials whereon to employ labour, but the want of means to pay for that labour, from which the now-deeply-felt want of employment has arisen.

That this want of employment, together with all the dreadful calamities, of which it is only one characteristic, should have arisen from *a sudden transition from war to peace*, is in such direct hostility to the *experience* of the world as well as to the dictates of reason, that your Petitioner is sure that the wisdom of your Honourable House will treat with scorn the ad-

vancing of a doctrine so preposterous;—that the transitions from war to peace, being changes from one state to another, which states are directly opposite in their natures and can by no possibility co-exist in any degree, must *always be sudden*;—that changes of this sort have taken place in all the civilized nations in the world a great number of times, and that never, until now, has it happened, that such a change has produced great and general national calamity;—that a transition from war to peace has, in all former cases, if accompanied by success or by no loss of dominion, in war, invariably been attended by a return, or an increase, of national prosperity and happiness;—that, from the nature of things this must be, seeing that peace naturally restores to productive labour the enjoyment of a large part of that which war requires to be given to unproductive labour, seeing that peace naturally renders certain many things which war keeps in a state of uncertainty, and seeing that a great mass of individual bodily and mental suffering is removed by a change from war to peace, on all which and numerous other grounds, all mankind speak of the *calamities of war* and the *blessings of peace* as they speak of the *torments of hell* and the *enjoyments of heaven*.

That, besides what has, in the above propositions, been, by your Petitioner most humbly submitted to the wisdom of your Honourable House, he begs permission to add, that even the experience of the present case affords ample ground for asserting, that a transition from war to peace has not been the cause of the nation's distresses and calamities, in proof of which your Petitioner has only to remind your Honourable House, that the want of employment and all the other symptoms of national pressure began to assume their present character in the autumn of the year 1813, and that the progress of the calamity through war and through peace, through high prices and through low prices, through plenty and through scarcity of food, has been undeviating from that time to this, though, at particular periods, its pace has been rendered quicker or slower by the adventitious circumstances of seasons or of foreign commerce.

In the face of these undeniable propositions, these notorious facts; in the face of the experience of

all civilized nations in all ages; in the face of reason and of nature: in the face of these, no one will, your Petitioner would fain hope, have the hardihood to insult your Honourable House by persevering in imputing the calamities of the nation to causes so perfectly imaginary, and, if they were real, so entirely inadequate to the producing of such tremendous effects.

That no effect can proceed from an inadequate cause is a proposition not necessary to be stated to your Honourable House, and, it is not less obvious, that the cause of great and general national calamity, bordering on an extermination of the people, must be not only powerful in its nature but all searching in the objects of its operation and influence: in short, your Petitioner scruples not to express his conviction, that when your Honourable House shall deign to turn your great contemplative powers to the *amount of the taxes* and the operation of the *paper-money system*, you will seek no farther for a *cause* of the calamities of the country, and that the *remedy* will not long remain hidden from your sight.

It is so well known, it must be so obvious to common sense, that the welfare of every community must depend on productive labour receiving just remuneration; that labour is property, and that not to pay for it when received, or to take from it its produce, is to destroy, or set at nought, the vital principles of property; that to take from those who labour and give to those who do not labour, is to put a band round the arms and prevent the blood from flowing into the hands, while the hands, thus benumbed, are called upon to produce food for the body; that in whatever degree a man *pays* without receiving *to his own use* the *worth in return*, he is *the poorer*; that what a man pays in taxes has no channel whereby to return to him other than the channels by which he may expect the return of money lost by him at the gaming-table or on the highway: these things are so well known, they are truths so obvious, that your Petitioner begs your Honourable House to be assured, that he states them merely to show his great anxiety to keep clear of all conclusions, absurd in themselves, or in anywise offensive to your Honourable House, without whose kind indulgence he is but too con-

scious that he is less than nothing.

Deeply penetrated with this sense of his own weakness, but feeling strong in his reliance on the cherishing countenance of your Honourable House, your humble Petitioner proceeds to express his conviction, that, as, in whatever degree a man pays without receiving to his own use the worth in return he must in that degree be poor, it inevitably follows, that, in whatever degree the great mass of the people pay without receiving to their use the worth in return, they must also be the poorer; and he begs leave to think, that from these premises it again inevitably follows, that taxes, in proportion to their amount, produce straightened means in some of the classes of society, poverty in other classes, actual want of a sufficiency of food and raiment in a third, and extreme misery bordering on starvation and accompanied with numerous crimes, and occasional madness, and death, in the lowest and most numerous class of all: whence it has come to pass in our unhappy country, that Taxes, Public Debts, Standing Armies, Military Staffs and Colleges, Lists of Place-men and Place-women and Pensioners, Police Establishments, Penal Laws, Poor-houses, Jails, and new modes and means of Hanging and Transporting, have all gone on increasing together.

The thought of appearing to prefer, in any respect, any country in the world before his own country, would be too painful for your Petitioner to endure, and he trusts that your Honourable House, in your well-known justice, will not suppose him to entertain such a thought, merely because he states to your Honourable House, that, in the country, which now affords him protection against dungeons and dealers in human blood, there are few taxes, and those in amount so insignificant as for their very existence to be unknown to the far greater part of the people; and, that the consequences are, that instances of misery and of crimes are so rare as to be a subject of wonder; that ease, happiness and content every where abound; and that an increase of population is regarded as a blessing and not as a curse.

Manifest, however, as your Petitioner humbly presumes your Honourable House will perceive it to be, that taxes, in proportion to their amount must necessarily occasion poverty and all the evils attendant on poverty, and that

the amount of the taxes in the kingdom is calculated to produce such effects in an unprecedented degree, yet he ventures, under the indulgence of your Honourable House, to express his conviction, that this cause of evil has received great additional and most mischievous force from the co-operation of a *paper-money*, forced into circulation and acceptance by diversartful and unjust contrivances, and *changeable in its value* at the pleasure of those by whom it has been made, issued and managed.

Your Petitioner fears not to state, that, if your Honourable House will be pleased to refer to the history of the calamities and convulsions, which have taken place in civilized states, during the last hundred and twenty years, you will find, that one of the most powerful of the causes has been a false, or fictitious, money, under the denomination of Bills, Notes, Assignats, and others, and always composed of Paper, bearing on it a promise to pay such or such sums to the bearer or possessor of such paper. In France, many years ago, a scheme of this description spread ruin far and wide, and, of late years, it has actually produced, by its co-operation with heavy and vexatious taxes, two distinct and sanguinary revolutions. In some of those colonies of North America, which are now the United States, a colonial paper-money, introduced more than sixty years ago, spread ruin and beggary amongst a people, who appeared to be so happily situated as to have no want ungratified. In the States of Austria, in Denmark, in Sweden, and in every other country, where such a system of fiction has prevailed, ruin and misery have always, sooner or later, been its fruits, of which fruits the United States themselves have not, as your Petitioner will hereafter beg leave to be permitted to show, wholly escaped the bitter taste.

The chief reason of this universally evil effect of such fictions is not less evident than the effect itself is notorious. Money being the universal standard, by comparison with which the value of all things bought and sold is ascertained; or, being the sign, which represents the value of all things which men buy, sell, or with regard to which they enter into contracts of loan, or otherwise, in a pecuniary way; such being the character of, or the office performed by, money, and money being inseparable from the daily

concerns of every man from the Prince to the Ploughman, it is obvious, that when money, when this standard of value, is *changeable*, whether at pleasure or from accident, and especially if the changes be sudden as to time and great in degree, a real violation of contracts, a transfer of property unjustly from one to another, and ruin, misery and confusion must ensue.

It is out of those just notions of the sacredness of money, as a standard of value and as the vital principle of contracts, that the law has arisen which considers to be *treason* the counterfeiting of the coin of the realm, such act of counterfeiting being to strike at the very root of society itself; and, as your Petitioner humbly presumes to believe, *counterfeiting* is neither more nor less than *a changing of the value of money*, an operation, which, when it takes place partially and in a small degree, produces injuries in a similar extent; but, when such changing of the standard of value is *general*, *sudden*, and, with regard to the community, as *secretly performed* as the works of the traitorous coiner, then it becomes a scourge more mortal than the pestilence that walketh by day and the arrow that flieth by night.

If your humble Petitioner were addressing himself to a body less enlightened than your Honourable House; if he had the misfortune to have to offer his opinions and prayers to men so profoundly ignorant of all the principles of political economy as to hope to cure the national calamities by voluntary contributions, or by setting labourers to dig holes one day and to fill them up the next; if he had the mortification to be addressing his prayers to men of this shallow and vulgar-minded description, he might think it necessary to illustrate his representations by supposing the number of cubic inches of the Winchester bushel, or the number of ounces of the pound weight, or the number of longitudinal inches of the foot measure, to be, all of a sudden, changed in a great degree, and without any previous notice to the public; and he is certain that even the most stupid assembly that ever disgraced the forms of legislation would perceive, that such changes would cause a real violation of innumerable contracts, and that distress and ruin to innumerable persons must inevitably follow; but, having the unspeakable felicity to be addressing himself to your Honourable House,

whose fame for profundity is surpassed only by your fame for candour and purity, your Petitioner has no need to resort to illustrations of any kind, and, therefore, hastened on by the fear of abusing the well-known indulgence of your Honourable House, he proceeds to trace to your Honourable House the progress of this unrelenting scourge, called Paper Money.

In the early stages of its existence this mortal enemy of human happiness and freedom, was, like the first fibres of the cancer, felt only in occasional twitches; but, as it advanced in bulk, its effects became more and more regularly and severely felt, 'till, at last, it has produced all the deadly effects now before our eyes. For a long series of years its visible effects were a regular increase of gambling, of fraud, and of all the vices engendered by a dependence on trick rather than on industry and talent; and its visible effects were a gradual changing of the real property of the country from the hands of the ancient owners into the hands of the dealers in Paper-Money, a gradual undermining of that natural magistracy which is ever the best bond of society, a consequent gradual hardening of the penal laws, and finally a gradually produced dislocation of all the joints and ligaments which held together without grudging and without violence all the orders of that admirable community that formed the people of England. As the powers of Paper-Money increased real property naturally grew into larger parcels, small farms became gradually less numerous, 'till, at last, they became wholly extinguished, while their industrious and virtuous cultivators sunk down into a state of labourers, and while the labourers, seeing no hope of ever acquiring any share of the profits of their labour, became less and less desirous of abstaining from demands on the parish rates.

Such, as your Honourable House must have perceived, were amongst the effects of this baleful system of Paper-Money previous to the year 1797, when it assumed a bolder and more desperate character; for, at that period, the makers and issuers of this fictitious representative of value, who had amassed to themselves, in exchange for their paper, large portions of the real wealth of the nation, under promises to exchange the paper into

gold at the pleasure of the holder, did, all of a sudden, and by an act unparalleled in its extent as well as in its wickedness, fulfil to the very letter the predictions of that Great Political Writer, who had foretold, only a year before, that such would be their conduct. Thence forward these makers and issuers poured forth their fictitious money so as to enhance prices to an astonishing degree, and, when they had given their paper in exchange for men's real property, for their estates in fee, or, more generally, in exchange for mortgages or other securities, they suddenly, and without any previous notice, so diminished the quantity of their paper in circulation as to lower prices one half in nominal amount, to lower the nominal value of real property, of stock in trade and of labour; and, they thus, by a changing of the standard of value at their own arbitrary will, acquired a legal demand upon all borrowers to double the real amount of the sums lent.

When your Honourable House reflects, that it is in the class of *borrowers* that you see all the greatest motives to exertion, all the most active and most enterprising part of the persons engaged in agriculture, trade, manufactures, and commerce; when your Honourable House reflects on this circumstance, and sees clearly, as your Petitioner humbly presumes you will, the mortal blow that this numerous and active part of the community must have received from this arbitrary change in the standard of value, he is quite sure that your Honourable House will need seek no farther for the cause of a want of employment and great national misery; and yet, in this sweeping violation of all private contracts, in this ruinous oppression of private borrowers, in this stab into the heart of individual industry, enterprize and hope, your Petitioner is convinced that your Honourable House will permit him to say, that there is seen a part only of the cruel effects of this arbitrary changing of the standard of value; for, it must be manifest to your Honourable House, that, if the private borrower must inevitably be ruined by this fraudulent operation, the bare possibility of which never could have entered his mind at the time of receiving the loan, the whole nation, except the lenders to the public and except those persons who derived emolu-

ment from the taxes, must also be ruined by the same operation, by which, in fact, the sums required in taxes, great as those sums were, were doubled in real amount.

Here then, and, as your Petitioner presumes humbly to express his belief, here only, is the real immediate cause of the present frightful calamities of the nation; for, when your Honourable House reflects on the numerousness of the class of borrowers, on the great portion of the productive labour of the country which this class sets and keeps in motion; when you reflect on the vast proportion of the product of labour which the taxes take away from those who labour and convey to those who do not labour; when you reflect that the total ruin of many borrowers, the straightened means of others, and the discouragement of all, must necessarily cause the money raised in taxes and paid to the lenders to be retained in a state of comparative inactivity, and, in numerous instances, transferred in loans public and private and in other investments to foreign countries; when your Honourable House reflects on these circumstances, your Petitioner is sure that your Honourable House will here find the real immediate cause of the nation's calamities, and that all the new notions of the injurious effect of the Poor-Laws, of a Surplus-Population, and of a Sudden Transition from War to Peace, will, at once, vanish, and, "like the baseless fabric of a "vision, leave not a wreck be-"hind."

Could it be possible, however, for a doubt still to remain in the mind of your Honourable House, the experience of the United States of America must, as your Petitioner confidently believes, wholly remove that doubt; for, though the whole of the principal of the Public Debt in this country does not exceed in amount the annual interest of the Debt with which our country is unhappily burthened; though the taxes here be so light as for their very existence to be absolutely unknown to the great mass of the community; yet, *from a sudden diminution of the quantity of Paper-money* which had been in circulation previously to 1815, ruin and misery were spread far and wide over all the commercial part of the community, a consequent stagnation of trade ensued, and, for the first time in the history of the country, a want of employment and pauperism and soup-shops began to rear

their hideous heads, and to produce what in their very nature they must produce, idleness, mendicity, and crimes. A wise and economical system of Government, an absence of standing armies, a reliance on the hearty good will of the people for the defence and due execution of the laws, a return in peace to all the habits and diminished expences of peace, will, it is hoped, wholly eradicate the evils produced by the Paper-Money, and which evils had been confined to the commercial towns and their immediate environs; but, if a country, situated as to pecuniary matters, and governed, as the United States are, could feel sensibly a blow from a sudden changing of the Standard of value; if a country, in which there is scarcely any such thing as a lease of lands, where mortgages are comparatively unknown, and where borrowing for purposes of agriculture and trade in general is carried to so trifling an extent; if, in such a country, the changing of the standard of value could be felt as a blow at its prosperity, and could produce, even in the smallest degree, *a want of employment*, while the richest of land is calling for cultivators, your Honourable House will not, your Petitioner is certain, entertain any doubt that a cause, similar in its nature but a thousand-fold greater in degree, has, as it necessarily must have, produced proportionate calamities in England.

Therefore, as your humble Petitioner has the unutterable happiness to be confident that he shall be honoured with the concurrence of your Honourable House as to the great immediate *cause* of the nation's manifold sufferings, so is he not less confident, that, in seeking for a *remedy*, your Honourable House will reject, as the vision of weak-minded dreamers, any project for altering the Poor-Laws, and that you will treat with ineffable contempt and scorn all the schemes for collecting the savings of a starving people, for preventing the labouring classes from marrying, and for causing holes to be dug one day and filled up the next; but, that, following the dictates of your own instinctive energy and wisdom, you will put an end to the evil by removing the cause; and that, as that cause manifestly is the taxes which drain away from productive labour so large a portion of its fruits to be, as above stated, conveyed, by the hands of the lenders of Paper-Money, into unproductive or foreign depositories, you will largely reduce the proportion of the money so raised and so conveyed away.

Therefore, your Petitioner, full of confidence in the well-known justice of your Honourable House, and fearing that he may already have trespassed beyond the bounds even of that great patience and indulgence which are traits so prominent in the now-well-established character of your Honourable House, proceeds, with all humility, distinctly to pray, that your Honourable House will be pleased, by measures, which, to your great wisdom may seem meet, to cause the interest of the Public Debt to be reduced; to cause all salaries, pensions and pay of every description proceeding from the public money to be reduced; to cause a revision of contracts between lenders and borrowers and letters and renters: so that the nation at large and that individuals in their several particular cases, may receive from the hands of your Honourable House protection from that injustice, which has been done them by an arbitrary change in the Standard of Value, and which change has produced such dreadful and so notorious calamities.

To this his humble and earnest prayer your Petitioner begs leave only to add a representation, that, long fore-seeing the calamities, which have now fallen upon his country with such astounding force, your Petitioner has, during eleven years, omitted no means within his humble sphere and capacity to produce the adoption of measures such as those now humbly submitted to the transcendant wisdom of your Honourable House; and that, upon several occasions, he has earnestly besought Members of your Honourable House to aid him, by proposing resolutions or otherwise, in the discharge of this important public duty; but, that, whether from indolence, indecision, or some other cause to your Petitioner unknown, he has never been able to obtain any thing beyond repeatedly broken promises of such aid; and, therefore it is that your Petitioner, in whose breast no time, no distance, no calamity, no injuries, can ever extinguish or damp the ardent love which he has always borne his native country, has now ventured, though with great deference and humility, to address directly to your Honourable House the exposition and prayer contained in this his most humble Petition.

And your Petitioner,
As in all duty and humility bound,
Will ever pray.

WM. COBBETT.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

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